

Marriage holds a position of perpetual significance because of the central role it plays in human life. It is not surprising, therefore, that the scholars of Islām have discussed it extensively through the ages. Under the contemporary influence of non-Islāmic cultures, however, misconceptions have crept into various areas of Islām – spilling into marriage, divorce, and other family-related matters.

Viewing the needs of the Muslims who live in non-Islāmic environments, and realizing that most Islāmic writings on marriage are restricted in scope, we find quite a large gap that needs to be filled for the benefit of the English-speaking Muslims – which is what we attempt to accomplish over the span of this 3-book set that covers various aspects of marriage according to the authentic Sunnah:

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

1.

The Quest for Love & Mercy

Regulations for Marriage & Wedding in Islām

Discusses the importance and advantages of marriage, selecting a spouse, the courting process, the marriage contract, celebrating the wedding, the *walimah*, and forbidden marriages. It provides a practical procedure for performing the marriage contract, and includes a sample marriage certificate.

هٰذَا بَيْنَكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا حَافِظٌ

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Closer than a Garment

Marital Intimacy According to the Pure Sunnah

Discusses the proper etiquettes of marital intimacy, forbidden acts of intimacy, *zinā*, and birth control. It answers many frequently-asked questions about various acts of intimacy.

رَفَقًا بِالْقَوَائِرِ

3.

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Discusses the rights and obligations of the two spouses. It includes brief biographies of the Mothers of the Believers, realistic pictures from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) with his wives, and a complete discussion of the *hadith* of Umm Zar'.



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الأسرة المسلمة

The Muslim Family -3

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً **Love & Mercy**

Regulations for
Marriage & Wedding in Islām

Revised Edition

محمد بن مصطفى الجبالي

Muhammad Mustafā al-Jibālī

مشورات الكتاب والسنة

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﴿وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً﴾
The Quest for Love & Mercy
Regulations for Marriage & Wedding in Islām

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

«وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
لَتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾»
الرُّومُ ٢١

«And among His signs is that He created for you, from yourselves, spouses that you may dwell (in joy and security) unto them, and He set between you love and mercy; surely in that are signs for those who reflect.»

[Ar-Rūm 30:21]

﴿وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً﴾

THE QUEST FOR LOVE & MERCY
REGULATIONS FOR MARRIAGE & WEDDING IN Islām

Revised Edition

مُحَمَّدُ مُصْطَفَى الْجِبَالِي

MUHAMMAD MUSTAFĀ AL-JIBĀLĪ

مَنْشُورَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS v

PRELUDE xiii

Opening Sermon	xiii
Our Mission: Purification and Cultivation	xiv
1. Purification	xvi
a) Purifying Our Sources of Knowledge (xvi)	
b) Purifying Our Beliefs (xvii)	
c) Purifying Our Actions (xvii)	
2. Cultivation	xviii
a) Becoming True Followers of the <i>Salaf</i> (xviii)	
b) Inviting to the Pure Religion (xviii)	
c) Presenting the Islāmic Solution (xx)	

PREFACE xxi

The Muslim Family	xxi
This Book	xxii
Acknowledgement	xxiii

CHAPTER 1

A BLESSED BOND 1

Marriage Is One of Allāh's Laws	1
Islām Urges the Muslims to Marry	2
Definition (2)	
A Command from Allāh and His Messenger (3)	
Allāh's Promised Help (4)	
Danger of Bachelorship (5)	
Marriage Is a Practice of the Prophets	6
Previous Prophets (6)	
Our Prophet (6)	
No Monasticism in Islām (7)	
Disliking the Sunnah? (8)	

Advantages of Marriage for Individuals	9
1. Preservation of Faith and Religion (9)	
2. Preservation of Chastity (10)	
3. Enjoying Love, Mercy and Security (11)	
4. Lawful Fulfillment of Desire (12)	
5. Pleasurable Way of Increasing Good Deeds (13)	
6. Living a Harmonious Life (16)	
7. Following the Way of the Prophets (17)	
8. Deserving Allāh's Help (17)	
9. A Lasting Relationship (17)	
Social Advantages of Marriage	18
1. Preserving Humankind (18)	
2. Preserving Kinship Ties (18)	
3. Safeguarding the Society from Moral Degeneracy (18)	
4. Safeguarding the Society from Physical Diseases (19)	
5. Establishing the Family Environment (19)	
6. Increasing the Number of Muslims (19)	
7. Strengthening the Muslim Community (20)	
 CHAPTER 2	
SPOUSE SELECTION 21	
Selecting a Wife	21
A Conditional Choice (21)	
1. Righteousness (22)	
1.a The Wife Brings Happiness or Misery (23)	
2. Good Character (24)	
3. Virginity (26)	
4. Ability to Bear Children (26)	
5. Loving Attitude (27)	
6. Contentment (28)	
7. Naivety (29)	
8. Beauty (29)	
9. Compatibility (30)	
Qualities Sought in a Good Husband	31
<i>Dīn</i> and Good Character (31)	
Is Wealth Important? (32)	
No Comparison (33)	

CHAPTER 3**COURTING 35**

Definitions and Examples	35
Definitions (35)	
Examples from the Sunnah (35)	
The <i>Bid'ah</i> of Reciting <i>al-Fātiḥah</i> (37)	
Looking at the Courted Woman	37
Permission (37)	
Conditions (39)	
Exchanging Photographs (40)	
Is a Woman Allowed to Look? (41)	
Talking and Correspondence (41)	
Woes of Internet Courting (42)	
Prohibited Courting	43
Courting a Married Woman (44)	
Courting a Woman Who is Being Courted (44)	
Other Prohibited Forms (46)	
Offering a Woman for Marriage	47
Performing <i>Istikhārah</i> and Seeking Advice	49
Description of <i>Istikhārah</i> (49)	
Misconceptions about <i>Istikhārah</i> (51)	
Seeking Advice (51)	
Telling the Truth (53)	
Violations in <i>Khiṭbah</i>	53
1. Privacy & Intimacy between the Engaged Couple (53)	
2. Engagement Party (54)	
3. Engagement Rings and Jewelry (54)	
 CHAPTER 4	
THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT 55	
Introduction	55
Importance of the Marriage Contract (55)	
No Joking in Marriage (55)	
Basic Elements (56)	
Bridegroom's Eligibility	57
Bride's Eligibility	57
The Bride's Permission	58

Moderateness in Eating	(123)
The Blessing of Eating with Others	(124)
Sitting Humbly and Eating from Around the Sides	(124)
Avoiding Wasting Food	(126)
Praising Allāh and Supplicating to Him after Eating	(127)
Supplicating for the Hosts	(130)
Departure	(131)

CHAPTER 7

CONSUMMATING THE MARRIAGE 133

Advising the Married Couple	133
Kindness to the Bride	133
Praying Two <i>Rak'ahs</i> Together	134
Invoking Allāh's Blessing	135
Islāmic Etiquettes of Marital Intimacy	136
Supplication Before Intercourse	(136)
Miscellaneous <i>Ādāb</i> for Intercourse	(137)
The Morning Following the Wedding	138
Honeymoon	138

CHAPTER 8

FORBIDDEN MARRIAGES 139

Permanently Prohibited Women	139
Introduction	(139)
Prohibition Based on Blood Relationships	(141)
Prohibition Based on Marital Relationships	(141)
Prohibition Based on Milk Relationships	(142)
Temporarily Prohibited Women or Marriages	146
Marrying More than Four Women	(146)
Simultaneously Marrying Two Sisters	(146)
Simultaneously Marrying Aunts and Their Nieces	(147)
Women Married to Other Men	(147)
Adulteresses	(147)
<i>Mushrik</i> Women	(149)
Marriage During <i>Ihrām</i>	(150)
Marrying a Pregnant Captive-Woman	(150)
Prohibited Marriages of <i>Jāhiliyyah</i>	151
'Ā'ishah's <i>Ḥadīth</i>	(151)

Partially Open Marriage	(152)
Marriage of a Group	(153)
Public Prostitution	(153)
Other Prohibited Marriages	153
Marriage of <i>Mu'ah</i>	(153)
Marriage of <i>Tahlīl</i>	(155)
Marriage of <i>Shighār</i>	(157)
Marriage with the Intention of Divorce	(158)
Marrying Non-Muslims	158
General Rule	(158)
Exception to the Rule	(159)
Who "the People of the Book" Are	(160)
A Difficult Condition	(161)
Conclusion	(162)

REFERENCES 165

APPENDIX A: MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE 169

APPENDIX B: ARABIC TERMINOLOGY 171

Introduction	171
Translating and Referencing Qur'ān and <i>Ḥadīth</i>	(171)
Useful Charts	(171)
Arabic Terms	(171)
Glossary of Common Terms	172
Arabic Weekdays and Islāmic <i>Hijrī</i> Months	177
Transliteration	178
Notable Utterances	179
Index of Arabic Terms	180

Opening Sermon

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

Al-hamdu lillāh. Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from our souls' evils and our wrong doings. He whom Allāh guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allāh — alone without a partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His 'abd (servant) and messenger.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ،

وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ آل عمران ١٠٢

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh the right reverence, and do not die except as Muslims.»¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ، وَخَلَقَ

مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا، وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي

تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ النساء ١

«O people! Revere your Lord who has created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women.

¹ Āl 'Imrān 3:102.

Revere Allāh through whom you demand things from one another, and (cherish the ties of) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-Watchful over you.»¹

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۖ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ، وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ، وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، فَقَدْ

فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا» الأحزاب ٧٠-٧١

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh and say just words. He will then rectify your deeds and forgive your sins. He who obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great victory.»^{2, 3}

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنْ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ،

وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ (ﷺ)، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا،

وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

Indeed, the best speech is Allāh's (ﷻ) Book and the best guidance is Muḥammad's (ﷺ) guidance. The worst affairs (of religion) are those innovated (by people), for every such innovation is an act of misguidance leading to the Fire.

Our Mission: Purification and Cultivation

Our goal is to promote true Islām that derives from Allāh's (ﷻ) Book, His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah, and the ṣaḥābah's (رضي الله عنهم) understanding.

¹ *An-Nisā'* 4:1.

² *Al-Ahzāb* 33:70-71.

³ The above paragraphs are called *Khuṭbat ul-Hājah* (the Sermon of Need) with which the Prophet (ﷺ) often started his speeches. This is recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, etc., from Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, and other companions (رضي الله عنهم). The Prophet (ﷺ) also said the very last paragraph when starting a speech. This is recorded by Muslim, an-Nasā'ī, etc., from Jābir (رضي الله عنه) (*al-Mishkāṭ* no. 137).

This is the only Path that can incorporate correct Islāmic beliefs and practices. Since, over the centuries, Muslims have largely drifted away from this magnificent Path, it becomes imperative to guide them back to it and help them live by its dictates.

Therefore, any serious work in promoting Islām must involve two fundamental components: purification and cultivation. Allāh (ﷻ) indicates that these two components were central to the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission:

«هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ، يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ،

وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ، وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ، وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ

لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ» الجمعة ٢

«It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His *āyāt*, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom — although they previously were in clear deviation.»¹

Our mission, then, is to present purified Islāmic teachings and practical guidelines for implementing them.

This book is a humble response to our realization of a great responsibility: the responsibility to bring forth before the English-speaking public writings that refine Islām and present it pure and simple, as close as possible to the way it was understood and practiced by its early righteous pioneers — the *salaf*.

We call upon all Muslims to support us in carrying out this noble trust. This will surely elevate and honor us and spread the eternal message of Islām all over the earth, as Allāh promises:

«هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ، بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ،

عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ» الصف ٩

«It is He who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, in order to make it

¹ *Al-Jum'ah* 62:2.

prevail over all (false) religions, however hateful this may be to pagans.»¹

In what follows, we discuss purification and cultivation further.

1. Purification

Purification (or *taṣfiyah*) is required in regard to the sources of our Islāmic knowledge, and in regard to our Islāmic beliefs and practices.

A) PURIFYING OUR SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

Wrong beliefs and practices deriving from weak reports have marred the beauty of Islām and prevented the Muslims' advancement. Therefore, we must purify our knowledge from weak and fabricated narrations. This is an essential task that must precede any action, because good actions can only be based on a solid foundation that may be traced back to Allāh's authentic revelation.

Praising those who strive in purifying the Islāmic knowledge, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يحمل هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله، ينفون عنه
تحريف الغالين، وانتحال المبطلين، وتأويل الجاهلين.»

«This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy individuals from every generation — they will expel from it alterations of the excessive, falsehoods of the liars, and misinterpretations of the ignorant.»²

¹ *Aṣ-Ṣaff* 61:9.

² Recorded by al-Bayhaqī, Ibn 'Adiyy, and others from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas'ūd, and other companions (رضي الله عنهم). It is verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Mishkāt ul-Maṣābīḥ* no. 239).

B) PURIFYING OUR BELIEFS

Beliefs of the Muslim masses have become contaminated with dogmas coming from sources alien to Islām. Therefore, part of the necessary purification process is to purify our beliefs so that they are only based on authentic texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, in compliance with the beliefs of the *ṣaḥābah*, and clean from any form of *shirk* (joining partners with Allāh). Allāh praised the *ṣaḥābah*'s beliefs by saying:

«فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا» البقرة ١٣٧

«So if they believe as you (O Prophet's companions) believe, they are indeed truly guided.»¹

C) PURIFYING OUR ACTIONS

We should also purify our actions so that they conform with authentic texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, compliant with the understanding and practice of the *ṣaḥābah*, and clean from human innovation (or *bid'ah*). This is the only acceptable path of guidance, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ،
وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، نُؤَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ، وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ،
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا» النساء ١١٥

«If a person opposes the Messenger, after guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the path of the believers², We will give him what (consequence) he chose and admit him into Hell — what an evil destination!»³

¹ *Al-Baqarah* 2:137.

² The description "believers" here applies primarily to the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم).

³ *An-Nisā* 4:115.

2. Cultivation

Cultivation (or *tarbiyah*) is to establish our beliefs and actions upon the purified knowledge. Cultivation goes hand-in-hand with purification.

A) BECOMING TRUE FOLLOWERS OF THE SALAF

The above discussion about purifying our beliefs and actions must extend to cultivating ourselves and our communities upon the purified teachings. If we do this, we can hope to be true followers of our great *salaf* — the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم). Allāh (ﷻ) praises both in the following:

«وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَدَّمُونَ وَالْآخِرُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُؤَخَّرُونَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا، ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ» التوبة ١٠٠

«The first to embrace Islām among the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār*, and also those who follow them in the best way, Allāh is pleased with them and they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, and in which they will abide eternally. This is the supreme success.»¹

This cultivation should bring back to Muslims the spirit of truth-seeking — instead of stubborn and narrow-minded adherence to *mathhabs* (sects) and prejudiced loyalty to parties.

B) INVITING TO THE PURE RELIGION

We should educate and guide the Muslims toward the purified Islām, so as to implement its teachings and revel in its virtues and ethics. We should also invite the non-Muslims to the unadulterated truth of Islām.

Promoting this blessed guidance is a duty that every Muslim should cherish and support. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

¹ At-Tawbah 9:100.

«وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ» آل عمران ١٠٤

«Let there arise from you (Muslims) a nation who invites to good, enjoins right, and forbids wrong, for those are the successful.»¹

This is an obligation on every Muslim according to his ability, as Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

«وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى، وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ» المائدة ٢

«Help one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sinning and transgression.»²

This is the only way to attain Allāh's acceptance and achieve happiness and success. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَالْعَصْرُ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ» العصر ١-٣

«By time, a human being is surely in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, mutually enjoin the truth, and mutually enjoin perseverance.»³

And this is the way to establish true and honest compassion among Allāh's servants — compassion emanating from a strong unifying cause. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا» آل عمران ١٠٣

¹ Āl 'Imrān 3:104.

² Al-Mā'idah 5:2.

³ Al-'Aṣr 103:1-3.

«And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allāh,
and be not divided among yourselves.» ¹

C) PRESENTING THE ISLĀMIC SOLUTION

Inviting to the Truth includes providing realistic Islāmic solutions to contemporary problems. There is no doubt that Allāh's guidance is the only comprehensive way to resolving people's problems at the individual and communal levels. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ، وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ.» المائدة ٤٩

«Judge between them according to what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their errant views.» ²

¹ *Āl 'Imrān* 3:103.

² *Al-Mā'idah* 5:49.

PREFACE

The Muslim Family

“The Muslim Family” is a series of books that presents detailed discussions relating to the family life, starting with courting and marriage, and extending into raising children according to Islām. To-date, this series consists of the following titles:

1	The Quest for Love & Mercy Regulations for Marriage & Wedding in Islām	«وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً»
2	Closer than a Garment Marital Intimacy According to the Pure Sunnah	«هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ، وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ.»
3	The Fragile Vessels Rights and Obligations between the Spouses in Islām	«رفقاً بالقوارير»
4	Our Precious Sprouts Islāmic Regulations for Newborns	أَفْلاذُ أَكْبَادِنَا

The first three parts of this series, including this current book, deal with various aspects of marriage.

Marriage holds a position of perpetual significance because of the central role it plays in the human life. It is not surprising, therefore, that the scholars of Islām have discussed it in extensive writings through the ages.

Under the contemporary influence of non-Islāmic cultures, many misconceptions have been introduced into various areas of Islām — spilling into issues of marriage, divorce, and other family-related matters.

Viewing the needs and concerns of the Muslims who are forced to live in such alien environments, we find that most Islāmic writings on marriage are restricted in scope — having been written for different cultures and backgrounds.

This leaves quite a large gap that needs to be filled for the benefit of the English-speaking Muslims — which is what we attempt to fulfill in this 3-book set that covers various aspects of marriage according to the authentic Sunnah:

The first book discusses the importance and advantages of marriage, selecting a spouse, the courting process, the marriage contract, the wedding celebration, the *walimah*, and forbidden marriages. It provides a practical procedure for performing the marriage contract and includes a model marriage certificate.

The second book discusses the proper etiquettes of marital intimacy, forbidden acts of intimacy, the perils of *zinā*, and birth control. It answers many frequently-asked questions about various acts of intimacy.

The third book discusses the rights and obligations of the two spouses. It includes brief biographies of the Mothers of the Believers, realistic pictures from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) with his wives, and a complete discussion of the *ḥadīth* of Umm Zar'.

This series deals with marriage and other family issues in a practical approach, taking advantage of the author's years of experience in the field of marriage and counseling. Each book serves as a complete handbook within its scope — providing reliable knowledge based on authentic evidence from Allāh's Book and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah.

This Book

This is the first book in "the Muslim Family" series. It discusses all steps involved in establishing the marriage. This includes the importance and advantages of marriage, qualities to be sought in a spouse, the courting process, conditions and requirements for the marriage contract, etiquettes for marriage consummation, wedding celebration, and forbidden types of marriage. It also points out a large number of violations to Islām that are commonly committed by Muslims at every step of the marriage process.

Within its scope, this book thoroughly covers all issues that are conventionally discussed or inquired about — which makes it valuable as a reference and a textbook. At the same time, its simple presentation

makes it easy to read and understand by the layman.

The first edition of this book was published five years ago (June 2000). While keeping the original content, this "revised edition" has the following main enhancements:

- ◇ It corrects many typing errors, both in the Arabic and English texts.
- ◇ It improves the style and structure of many sentences and paragraphs.
- ◇ It replaces the original "Prelude" and "Arabic Terms" with improved versions.
- ◇ The cover's color-scheme and other art-work have been modified.

Acknowledgement

All praise and thanks are due to our Lord (ﷻ) who facilitated the completion of this work. May He further reward all the Muslims who helped and supported this effort in various ways. In particular, may Allāh (ﷻ) reward my *shaykh* and teacher, Muḥammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī whose works have benefited us in ways beyond description, my son 'Abdullāh who designed the original cover, Sundus al-As'ad who proof-read the manuscript of the original edition, and my daughters who proofread the manuscript and provided valuable suggestions.

We ask Allāh (ﷻ) to make this humble effort helpful and profitable to the Muslims, forgive our shortcomings, purify our work from hypocrisy and conceit, and accept it from us.

«رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ،
وَجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾ الفرقان ٧٤»

«Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who
will be the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders

for the pious.»¹

﴿رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي، رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ﴾

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤٠﴾

إبراهيم ٤٠-٤١

«My Lord! Let me establish the prayer, and the same for my progeny. Our Lord! Answer my *du'ā*. Our Lord! forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day of Reckoning.»²

Our Lord, forgive us and all of the believers, and bestow Your peace and praise upon our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

Muhammad Mustafā at-Jibālī

Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah

Wednesday, 26 Rajab 1426

31 August 2005

¹ *Al-Furqān* 25:74.

² *Ibrāhīm* 14:40-41.

CHAPTER 1

A BLESSED BOND

Marriage Is One of Allāh's Laws

Allāh (ﷻ) created our world and the laws that govern it. Among Allāh's laws is that we need food to survive, air to breathe, rain for vegetation, and so on.

One of Allāh's important laws is that things are created in pairs; and from these pairs, reproduction occurs. Allāh says:

﴿وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾ الذاريات ٤٩

«We have created all things in pairs, that perhaps you may remember.»¹

This applies to human beings who are made of male-female pairs as well. Humankind started with our father, Ādam, and our mother, Hawwā' (Eve). From that pair, Allāh (ﷻ) created all of the other people, as He (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ، وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا، وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً.﴾ النساء ١

«O people! Revere your Lord who has created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women.»²

¹ *Ath-Thāriyāt* 51:49.

² *An-Nisā'* 4:1.

And He (ﷺ) says:

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ، وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا، إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾» الحجرات ١٣

«O people! We have created you from one male and one female, and have made you nations and tribes so as to know one another. The noblest among you in the sight of Allāh is the most pious. Verily, Allāh is All-Knowing and All-Aware.»¹

This continues to be the way of reproduction for humans, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا، وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً، وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ. ﴿٧٢﴾» النحل ٧٢

«Allāh has given you spouses from yourselves, and has given you, from your spouses, children and grandchildren, and has provided you with good things for your sustenance.»²

Islām Urges the Muslims to Marry

DEFINITION

The word commonly used in Islāmic texts for marriage is *nikāḥ*. In the original Arabic language, it means “intercourse”. But it was then applied to the marriage agreement because it is a means to intercourse.³

Thus the statement, “He performed *nikāḥ* on the daughter of so and so,” normally means that he executed an agreement for marriage. On

1 *Al-Hujurāt* 49:13.

2 *An-Nahl* 16:72.

3 *Lisān ul-‘Arab*.

the other hand, the statement, “He performed *nikāḥ* on his wife,” means intercourse. In this book, we will mostly replace the word “*nikāḥ*” with its English equivalents to avoid confusion.

A COMMAND FROM ALLĀH AND HIS MESSENGER

Allāh (ﷻ) commands the believers to marry and help those under their charge to marry as well. He says:

«وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ، إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ، وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾» النور ٣٢

«Marry the unmarried among you and the righteous of your male and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allāh will enrich them from His favors. Allāh is Bountiful and Knowing.»¹

Also, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) commanded the young people to marry, and advised those of them who could not afford it to fast as a means of controlling their sexual desire. Ibn Mas’ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported, “We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) while we were young and had no wealth whatsoever. So Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يا معشر الشباب، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنْهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصْرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ.»

«Young men, those among you who can afford marriage should do so, for it helps lower the gaze and guard the private parts (from *zinā*). And those who cannot afford it should fast, for fasting is a repression (of desire) for him.»²

Similarly, Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1 *An-Nūr* 24:32.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

«عليكم بالباة، فَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ.»

«You should marry. And those who cannot afford it should fast, because it restrains their desire.»¹

And 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ ذَا طَوْلٍ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ

وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ، وَمَنْ لَا فَالْصَّوْمُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ.»

«Anyone among you who has the ability should marry, because it helps lower the (lustful) gaze and guard the private parts. And whoever cannot afford it should fast, because fasting is a restraint (of desire) for him.»²

ALLĀH'S PROMISED HELP

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) indicates that Allāh promises to help any person who aspires to marry in order to avoid sinning. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ثَلَاثَةٌ حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَوْنُهُمُ: الْمَجَاهِدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ،

وَالْمَكَاتِبُ الَّذِي يَرِيدُ الْأَدَاءَ، وَالنَّاكِحُ الَّذِي يَرِيدُ الْعَقَافَ.»

«There are three individuals that it is a right upon Allāh to help them: a fighter for Allāh's cause, a *mukātib*³ who wants to pay himself off, and one who seeks marriage for the purpose of preserving his chastity.»⁴

¹ Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Awṣaṭ*) and aḍ-Ḍiyā' ul-Maqdisī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 4058).

² Recorded by an-Nasā'ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 6498).

³ A slave who makes a contract with his master to purchase his freedom.

⁴ Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-

In another report, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَوْنُ مَنْ نَكَحَ التَّمَّاسَ الْعَفَافِ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ.»

«It is a right upon Allāh to help one who seeks to marry for the purpose of avoiding what Allāh has prohibited.»¹

DANGER OF BACHELORSHIP

A strange phenomenon has recently developed among Muslims, without being confined to one country or nationality — a phenomenon whose consequences can prove to be most devastating to the Muslim community. This phenomenon is the alarming number of unmarried Muslim men and women.

On an individual level, it may appear that bachelorship poses a very insignificant threat to the Islāmic world. However, in Islām, unlike other religions, matters are weighed in light of their benefits or harms to the community as a whole. So, what is the effect of single unmarried men and women on the community? To find the answer to this question, all one has to do is look at the non-Muslim communities. Every day we are confronted by the perversion and sinful practices that the non-Muslims find acceptable in their societies. This occurs because of their unnatural decision to abstain from marriage.

No Muslim would want the Muslim *Ummah* to fall into lifestyles like those of Pompeii or Sodom and Gomorrah — towns that Allāh totally destroyed because of their perversion and disobedience. Protection against a fate similar to that can only be through lawful marriage.

Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3050).

¹ Recorded by Ibn 'Adiyy. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3152).

Marriage Is a Practice of the Prophets

PREVIOUS PROPHETS

Previous prophets of Allāh have married women, and none of them was known to practice celibacy. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً.» الرعد ٣٨

«And We have surely sent messengers before you (O Muḥammad) and granted them wives and offspring.»¹

OUR PROPHET

The Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) indicated that marriage is part of his Sunnah, and that whoever neglects it is not of his true followers. Even though he derived the greatest pleasure and highest satisfaction from the prayer, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) expressed that he still had the desire for worldly pleasures such as women and perfume. This is only natural for a human messenger. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«حُبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ دُنْيَاكُمْ النِّسَاءُ وَالطِّيبُ، وَجُعِلَتْ قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ.»

«Of your worldly life, I have been made to desire women and perfume. But the satisfaction of my eye has been made in the *ṣalāh*.»²

ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«النِّكَاحُ سُنَّتِي، فَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِسُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي. وَتَزَوَّجُوا فَإِنِّي مَكَاتِرٌ بِكُمْ الْيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ. وَمَنْ كَانَ ذَا طَوَّلٍ فَلْيَنْكِحْ،

¹ *Ar-Ra'ad* 13:38.

² Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3124).

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّ الصَّوْمَ لَهُ وَجَاء.»

«Marriage is a *sunnah* (way) of mine; and whoever does not follow my Sunnah is not of my followers. Marry because I will display your outnumbering the other nations on Resurrection Day. Whoever has wealth should marry, and whoever does not should fast, because fasting is a restraint for him.»¹

Ibn ʿAbbās (رضي الله عنه) said to Saʿīd Bin Jubayr (رضي الله عنه):

“Marry; indeed, the best of this *Ummah* (the Prophet ﷺ) had the most wives.”²

NO MONASTICISM IN ISLĀM

Some of the followers of the earlier prophets tried monasticism as a self discipline that could possibly bring them closer to Allāh. However, they were not able to fulfill it as well as they had hoped. The reason is simply that it contradicts human nature, and that is why it is not permitted in Islām.

ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Khuwaylah, daughter of Ḥakīm Bin Umayyah Bin Ḥārithah Bin al-Awqaṣ as-Sulamī (from the tribe of Sulam) visited her. Khuwaylah was married to ʿUthmān Bin Maẓʿūn. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saw her and noticed her messy appearance; so he asked ʿĀ'ishah, «يا عائشة، ما أبدتْ هَيْئَةً خَوِيلَةً؟» «O ʿĀ'ishah! What makes Khuwaylah appear so messy?» ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها) replied, “O Allāh's Messenger! This woman's husband fasts during the day and prays during the night. So it is as if she does not have a husband, and thus she neglected her appearance.” Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then summoned ʿUthmān Bin Maẓʿūn and said to him, «يا عثمان، أرغبت عن سنتي؟» «O ʿUthmān! Are you doing that because you dislike my Sunnah?» He replied, “By Allāh, no, O Allāh's Messenger! Rather, my whole interest is to follow your Sunnah.” Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then said:

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2383).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Aḥmad.

«فإني أنامُ وأصلي، وأصومُ وأفطرُ، وأنكحُ النساء. فَأَتَقِ اللَّهَ
يا عثمانُ، فَإِنْ لَأَهْلِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَإِنْ لَضَيْفِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا،
وَإِنْ لِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا. فَصُمْ وَأَفْطِرْ، وَصَلِّ وَنَمْ.»

«Verily, I sleep and pray, fast and break fast, and marry women. Thus fear and revere Allāh O 'Uthmān, because your family has a right upon you, your guests have a right upon you, and your self (body) has a right upon you. So, fast and break fast, and pray and sleep.»¹

In another report by 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to him:

«يا عثمانُ، إِنْ الرِّهْبَانِيَّةُ لَمْ تُكْتَبْ عَلَيْنَا، أَمَّا لَكَ فِي أُسْوَةٍ؟
فَوَاللَّهِ إِنِّي أَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ، وَأَحْفَظُكُمْ لِحُدُودِهِ.»

«O 'Uthmān! Monasticism has not been enjoined upon us. Do you not have an example in me? By Allāh, verily I fear Allāh and safeguard His boundaries more than any of you.»²

DISLIKING THE SUNNAH?

As we have seen above, fulfilling a natural desire in a lawful way is not wrong, and it does not represent a lack of piety. Rather, that is the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) who is the most pious of all people.

To the same meaning, Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that a number of men went to the houses of the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives and inquired about the Prophet's (ﷺ) manner of worship. When the Mothers of the Believers described that to them, they thought that he (ﷺ) did too little. Then

1 Recorded by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2015).

2 Recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān, Aḥmad, and aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2015).

they argued, "How could we reach Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) level, when all of his previous and later sins have been forgiven?" So one of them pledged, "I will always pray the whole night without sleeping." One said, "I will fast every single day." One said, "I will abstain from women and never marry." One said, "I will never sleep on a mattress." And one said, "I will never eat meat." When the Prophet (ﷺ) heard of that, he addressed them and the other Muslims, saying:

«أما واللهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ، وَلَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأَفْطِرُ،
وَأَصْلِي وَأَرْقُدُ، وَأَتَزَوِّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.»

«Indeed, by Allāh, I fear Allāh and revere Him better than any of you; yet I fast (some days) and break my fast (on others), I pray (part of the night) and sleep (the other part), and I marry women. So, anyone who dislikes my Sunnah is not (a follower) of me.»¹

Advantages of Marriage for Individuals

Being ordained by Allāh the Most Wise and All-Knowing, marriage is sure to have many virtues and advantages. In what follows we list a number of them.

1. PRESERVATION OF FAITH AND RELIGION

Righteous spouses assist one another in preserving their *Dīn* by offering help, support, and advice that enable them to obey Allāh and abstain from sinning. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ امْرَأَةً صَالِحَةً فَقَدْ أَعَانَهُ عَلَى
شَطْرِ دِينِهِ، فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِي الشَّطْرِ الْبَاقِي.»

«When Allāh grants one a righteous wife, He has

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

helped him (by that) to preserve half of his religion. Let him then fear and revere Allāh in regard to the other half.»¹

In another report from Anas (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إذا تزوج العبدُ فقد استكملَ نصفَ دينه، فليَتَّقِ اللهَ فيما بقي.»

«When a servant (of Allāh) marries, He has (by that) completed half of his religion. Let him then fear and revere Allāh in regard to the other half.»²

Anas (رضي الله عنه) also reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من تزوّج فقد استكملَ نصفَ الإيمان، فليَتَّقِ اللهَ في النصف الباقي.»

«When a person marries, He has (by that) completed half of his faith. Let him then fear and revere Allāh in regard to the remaining half.»³

2. PRESERVATION OF CHASTITY

Men have a natural desire for women, and vice versa. Satan takes advantage of that to entice men and move their lusts when a woman approaches or moves away from them. He pictures her to them in an attractive and appealing form, which may lead them to various forms of sinning in compliance with their lusts.

Usāmah Bin Zayd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما تركت بعدي فتنةً أضرَّ على الرجال من النساء.»

«I have not left after me a trial more harmful to men

1 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 625).

2 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Awṣaṭ*) and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 625 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 430).

3 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Awṣaṭ*. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 625 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 6148).

than women.»¹

A married person has a quick means of protection against the Devil's whispers and seduction. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said:

«إن المرأة تُقبلُ في صورةِ شَيْطَانٍ، وتُدبرُ في صورةِ شَيْطَانٍ، فإذا

أبصرَ أحدُكم مِن امرأةٍ ما يسرُّه فليأتِ أهله، فإنَّ عندها ما

عندها، وإن ذلكَ يردُّ ما في نفسه.»

«A woman approaches in the (tempting) form of a devil, and moves away in the (tempting) form of a devil. When any of you finds in a woman something that attracts him, he should go to his wife, because she has the same as the other woman has, and that satisfies his desire (in a lawful way).»²

3. ENJOYING LOVE, MERCY AND SECURITY

Love and mercy are important sentiments that brighten one's life and give him a feeling of reassurance, security, and happiness. One of Allāh's (ﷻ) great favors is the love and mercy that He instills among the married couple. They dwell into each other, just as one dwells into a house that gives him protection, security, and happiness. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً، إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ

يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ الروم ٢١

«And among His signs is that He created for you, from yourselves, spouses that you may dwell (in joy

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 This is a combined report recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 235).

and security) unto them, and He set between you love and mercy; surely in that are signs for those who reflect.»¹

Furthermore, there is a wonderful feel of closeness between the married couple — similar to the closeness of a garment to a person's body. They provide for each other protection, comfort, and cover. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«هِنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ، وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ.» البقرة ١٨٧

«They are a garment for you and you are a garment to them.»²

4. LAWFUL FULFILLMENT OF DESIRE

As is indicated above, Allāh (ﷻ) has instilled in human beings the desire for the opposite gender. This desire may be satisfied in unlawful ways that would have destructive effects on the individuals and societies — as is detailed later in this book.

Alternatively, one of Allāh's great favors on us is that he provided us with marriage as a lawful channel for venting our desires. Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنهما) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«الدُّنْيَا كُلُّهَا مَتَاعٌ، وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ.»

«This life is a temporary accommodation, and the best of its accommodations is a righteous wife.»³

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "We have an orphan girl under our custody. A poor man and a rich man have both courted her. She prefers the poor man, but we prefer the rich man. (What should we do?)" The Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

¹ Ar-Rūm 30:21.

² Al-Buqarah 2:187.

³ Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and an-Nasā'ī.

«لَمْ يَرِ لِلْمُتَحَابِّينِ مِثْلُ النِّكَاحِ.»

«For those who like each other, nothing has proven as good as marriage.»¹

5. PLEASURABLE WAY OF INCREASING GOOD DEEDS

Not only is marriage a lawful means of fulfilling a person's desire, but is also a means of increasing one's balance of good deeds.

Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنه) reported that some of the companions of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) complained to him. "O Allāh's Messenger! The wealthy people have taken away all of the rewards. They pray as we do and fast as we do, and they give charities from their extra monies." He (ﷺ) replied:

«أَوَلَيْسَ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مَا تَصَدَّقُونَ؟ إِنْ بِكُلِّ تَسْبِيحَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ،

وَبِكُلِّ تَكْبِيرَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ، وَبِكُلِّ تَهْلِيلَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ، وَبِكُلِّ تَحْمِيدَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ، وَأَمْرٌ

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَنَهْيٌ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ. وَفِي بُضْعِ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ.»

«But has Allāh not given you that which you may offer as charity? Verily:

- ⇒ Every *tasbīḥ* (saying "Subḥān Allāh — Exalted is Allāh") is a charity;
- ⇒ Every *takbīr* (saying "Allāhu akbar — Allāh is the Greatest") is a charity;
- ⇒ Every *tahlīl* (saying "Lā ilāha illallāh — There is no true deity except Allāh") is a charity;
- ⇒ Every *tahmīd* (saying "Al-ḥamdu lillāh — Praise be to Allāh") is a charity;
- ⇒ Commanding good is a charity;
- ⇒ Forbidding the evil is a charity;
- ⇒ And having intercourse (with your wife) is a charity.»

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah no. 624).

The companions asked, "O Allāh's Messenger, does a person even receive a reward for fulfilling his desire?" He (ﷺ) responded:

«أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ وَضَعَهَا فِي حَرَامٍ، أَكَانَ عَلَيْهِ فِيهَا وَزْرٌ؟»

«Assume that he directed it toward a prohibition (zinā), would that not result in a burden for him?»

They replied, "Yes, indeed." He (ﷺ) deduced:

«فكَذَلِكَ إِذَا وَضَعَهَا فِي الْحَلَالِ كَانَ لَهُ فِيهَا أَجْرٌ.»

«Therefore, if he directs it toward that which is permissible (his wife), he gets a reward for it.»

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then mentioned a number of other things that constitute charities, and concluded by saying:

«وَيُجْزَى مِنْ هَذَا كُلُّ رَكْعَتَا الضُّحَى.»

«And all of that may be covered by two rak'āt that one would pray in the mid-morning.»¹

Commenting on this, al-Albānī (رحمته) said:

"As-Suyūṭī said in *Ithkār ul-Athkār* that one's intercourse (with his wife) is a charity, even if he did not have any intention in that regard. My opinion is that this may be true for each intercourse, but he should have a prior intention in that regard at least when he first married her. And Allāh knows best."²

In a similar *ḥadīth*, Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ طَلَعَتْ فِيهِ الشَّمْسُ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ.»

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

² *Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 138.

«It is required for every person, every day upon which the sun rises, to offer a charity for himself.»

Abū Tharr asked, "O Allāh's Messenger! How can I give charity when I have no money?" He (ﷺ) replied:

«لَأَنَّ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الصَّدَقَةِ التَّكْبِيرَ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، وَتَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَتَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَتَعَزِلُ الشُّوْكَةَ عَنْ طَرِيقِ النَّاسِ وَالْعِظْمَةَ وَالْحَجَرَ، وَتَهْدِي الْأَعْمَى، وَتُسْمِعُ الْأَصْمَ وَالْأَبْكَمَ حَتَّى يَفْقَهُ، وَتَدُلُّ الْمُسْتَدِلَّ عَلَى حَاجَةٍ لَهُ قَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَكَانَهَا، وَتَسْعَى بِشِدَّةٍ سَاقِيكَ إِلَى اللَّهْفَانِ الْمُسْتَغِيثِ، وَتَرْفَعُ بِشِدَّةٍ ذِرَاعَيْكَ مَعَ الضَّعِيفِ: كُلُّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الصَّدَقَةِ مِنْكَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ. وَلَكَ فِي جَمَاعِكَ زَوْجَتَكَ أَجْرٌ.»

«That is because among the forms of charity are:

- ⇒ *Takbīr* (saying "Allāhu akbar — Allāh is the Greatest");
- ⇒ (Saying) "Subḥān Allāh — Exalted be Allāh";
- ⇒ (Saying) "Al-ḥamdu lillāh — Praise be to Allāh";
- ⇒ (Saying) "Lā ilāha illallāh — There is no true deity except Allāh";
- ⇒ (Saying) "Astaghfir Ullāh — I seek forgiveness from Allāh";
- ⇒ Commanding good;
- ⇒ Forbidding evil;
- ⇒ Removing thorns, bones, and rocks from the people's way;
- ⇒ Guiding a blind man;
- ⇒ Helping a deaf and dumb man hear and understand;
- ⇒ Directing a person who lost something to loss — if you know where it is;
- ⇒ Running, with the power of your legs, to help one who is desperately seeking help;
- ⇒ Raising, with the power of your arms, an object

for a weak person;

⇒ **Having intercourse with your wife: you get a reward for this as well —**

All of those are forms of charity that you earn for yourself.

Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنه) asked, "How could I get a reward for fulfilling my desire?" The Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

«أَرَأَيْتَ لو كان لك ولدٌ فأدركَ ورجوتَ خيرَه فماتَ، أَكُنْتَ تَحْتَسِبُهُ؟»

«If you had a child who reached puberty, and you expect good from him, but he died, would you seek Allāh's reward for that?»

Abū Tharr replied, "Yes!" The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: «فَأَنْتَ خَلَقْتَهُ؟» **«Are you the one who created him?»** Abū Tharr replied, "No, it is Allāh who created him." The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: «فَأَنْتَ هَدَيْتَهُ؟» **«Are you the one who guides him?»** Abū Tharr replied, "No, it is Allāh who guides him!" The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: «فَأَنْتَ تَرْزُقُهُ؟» **«Are you the one who sustains him?»** Abū Tharr replied, "No, it is Allāh who sustains him!" The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

«كَذَلِكَ، فَضَعُهُ فِي حِلَالِهِ وَجَنَّبَهُ حَرَامَهُ، فَإِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

أَحْيَاهُ، وَإِنْ شَاءَ أَمَاتَهُ، وَلَكَ أَجْرٌ.»

«Thus, place it (your seed) in what is lawful (intercourse with your wife), and avoid for it what is prohibited (zinā). Then, if Allāh wills, He would give it life; and if He wills, He would make it die, and you would be rewarded (in both cases).»¹

6. LIVING A HARMONIOUS LIFE

Marriage allows a person to live in harmony with his human nature,

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Ḥibbān, and an-Nasā'ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 575).

and eliminates from him feelings of conflict and dejection. As indicated earlier, abstaining from marriage is an unnatural act that has been prohibited by the Prophet (ﷺ). To the same meaning, Sa'd Bin Abī Waqqāṣ and Samurah Bin Jundub (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«نهى رسول الله عن التَّبَتُّلِ.»

«Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited abstinence from marriage.»¹

7. FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE PROPHETS

We saw above that marriage was a practice of the prophets. Since they were all chosen by Allāh (ﷻ) as examples for humanity, their practices are good, and it is our duty to follow them as much as we can.

8. DESERVING ALLĀH'S HELP

We saw earlier (p. 5) that Allāh (ﷻ) will surely help anyone who marries intending by that to guard himself against sinning.

9. A LASTING RELATIONSHIP

When a married couple has a good relationship based on faith and *taqwā*, their relationship will extend into the next life and the woman will continue to be the wife of the last man to whom she was married in this life.

Abū ad-Dardā' (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَيُّمَا امْرَأَةٍ تُوُفِيَ عَنْهَا زَوْجُهَا، فَتَزَوَّجَتْ بَعْدَهُ، فَهِيَ لِأَخْرِ أَزْوَاجِهَا.»

«Any woman whose husband dies and she marries after him, she will then be (in the hereafter) for the last one of her husbands.»²

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2704 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1281).

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«المرأة لآخر أزواجها.»

«A woman will be for the last one of her husbands.»¹

Social Advantages of Marriage

From the above discussion, we can conclude that marriage has many advantages to the society as a whole. In what follows we list a number of them.

1. PRESERVING HUMANKIND

Marriage fulfills Allāh’s law for the reproduction, as we have discussed earlier. Thus it constitutes a correct means of preserving humankind — until Allāh inherits the Earth and all what is on it.

2. PRESERVING KINSHIP TIES

Contrary to *zinā*, marriage preserves and reveres the kinship ties. It establishes the paternal relationships between the children and their parents, giving them all a feeling of dignity and self esteem. That strengthens the feelings of love and care within the society.

3. SAFEGUARDING THE SOCIETY FROM MORAL DEGENERACY

Marriage is the proper way to establishing correct and permissible relationships between men and women. This helps maintain chastity, and protects the Muslim individuals from slipping into the filth of *zinā* and other sins related to it (which will be fully discussed in a subsequent chapter). Thus, marriage closes the door in the face of many acts of moral degeneracy and decadence, which are among the major causes for the destruction of societies.

¹ Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 6691 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1281).

4. SAFEGUARDING THE SOCIETY FROM PHYSICAL DISEASES

Together with *zinā* and its related vices comes a host of destructive diseases. Among those are gonorrhea, syphilis, venereal ulcers, and, most recently, AIDS. Marriage is an important means of protecting the society from these and many other diseases that can be easily transmitted, and that do not even spare children.

5. ESTABLISHING THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Marriage is a necessary step toward establishing a healthy environment for nurturing and rearing children. Our children are the fruits of our generation and the future men and women of our *Ummah*. Through good marriages, we furnish them with the love, mercy, compassion, and guidance, that they need for proper growth and development.

6. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF MUSLIMS

In Islām, what counts is not quantity alone, but quantity together with quality. Therefore, we are urged to increase the number of GOOD Muslims — not superficial Muslims. Good Muslims are those who live by Allāh’s (ﷻ) commands and follow His Messenger’s (ﷺ) guidance. Such are the people who should increase and multiply so as to establish Allāh’s religion in this life and enter His gardens in the next.

A Muslim should marry with the intention of increasing the number of righteous Muslims. Subsequently, he should strive to raise his family upon to the true religion. Only then, would they be among the numbers of Muslims who will please and delight Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) on Judgment Day to the extent that he will boast about them in front of the multitudes of nations who will be present.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«انكحوا فإني مكاثر بكم.»

«Marry, because I will exhibit your large numbers (on Judgment Day).»¹

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 1281).

Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تزوجوا فإني مكاثر بكم الأمم، ولا تكونوا كرهبانية النصارى.»

«Marry so that (on Judgment Day) I will be delighted by your outnumbering other nations. Do not practice monasticism like the Christians.»¹

7. STRENGTHENING THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

When a nation multiplies in the right and lawful way, it preserves the kinship relationships and protects its citizens from diseases — which results in a powerful nation. To the contrary, adultery loosens and severs the kinship ties, and results in the spread of diseases and perversions, which cause the nations to decline and fall. Allāh (ﷻ) wants the Muslim *Ummah* to be a powerful nation capable of establishing His laws and spreading His guidance in a most efficient way. This may only be fulfilled through maintaining chastity with lawful marriage.

1514).

¹ Recorded by al-Bayhaqī and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2941 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1782).

CHAPTER 2

SPOUSE SELECTION

In the previous chapter, we established the great significance of marriage. With that in mind, a Muslim is urged to seek a partner that would help him (or her) attain the desired fruits of marriage in a most fulfilling way. This makes the task of selecting a spouse most crucial.

Selecting a Wife

A CONDITIONAL CHOICE

In Islām, a man is given some choice in regard to marriage. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ، فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ. ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾ النساء ٣»

«If you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry whatever pleases you of (other) women: two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just (with them) then (marry) only one woman, or those that your right hands possess (of captives and slaves). That is better in preventing you from doing injustice.»¹

However, “whatever pleases you of women” is a general directive that is further clarified in many texts of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. There are certain important qualities that a man should seek in the woman whom he wants to be his life-partner and the mother of his children.

¹ *An-Nisā'* 4:3.

In what follows we mention the most important of those qualities.

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS

The first and foremost vital quality for a wife is righteousness. The Prophet (ﷺ) urged the men to seek a woman of faith and piety, and indicated that a man attains happiness through marrying her.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تُنكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ، لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا،
فَأَظْفَرِ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ، تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ.»

«A woman is sought in marriage for four reasons: wealth, social status, beauty, and *dīn* (piety). So seek the one with *dīn* — may you then be successful^{1, 2}»

Thawbān (رضي الله عنه) reported that when Allāh (ﷻ) revealed the warning in regard to those who treasure gold and silver³, the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم) wondered, “What kind of wealth should we then keep?” And ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, “I will find the answer to this.” He rode his camel fast until he caught up with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), and he (Thawbān) was right behind him. He asked, “O Allāh’s Messenger! What kind of wealth should we keep?” He (ﷺ) replied:

«لِيَتَّخِذَ أَحَدُكُمْ قَلْبًا شَاكِرًا، وَلِسَانًا ذَاكِرًا،
وَزَوْجَةً مُؤْمِنَةً تُعِينُهُ عَلَى أَمْرِ الْآخِرَةِ.»

«Let each of you keep a heart grateful (to Allāh), a tongue constantly extolling (Allāh), and a believing wife who would assist him in regard to the affairs of

1 Literally, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «May your hands be filled with dust.» This expression was common during the Prophet’s (ﷺ) time, and it was not meant literally. It is an exclamation phrase reflecting encouragement or applause.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 At-Tawbah 9:34-35.

the hereafter.»¹

Abū Umāmah and ‘Alī (رضي الله عنهما) Similarly reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«قَلْبٌ شَاكِرٌ، وَلِسَانٌ ذَاكِرٌ، وَزَوْجَةٌ صَالِحَةٌ تُعِينُكَ
عَلَى أَمْرِ دُنْيَاكَ وَدِينِكَ: خَيْرٌ مَا أَكْتَنَزَ النَّاسُ.»

«A heart grateful (to Allāh), a tongue extolling (Allāh), and a righteous wife who would assist you in the affairs of your life and religion — these are people’s best treasures.»²

1.A THE WIFE BRINGS HAPPINESS OR MISERY

In this life, a righteous wife is a main source of happiness, whereas an evil wife is a major cause of misery. Sa’d Bin Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَرْبَعٌ مِنَ السَّعَادَةِ، وَأَرْبَعٌ مِنَ الشَّقَاءِ. فَمِنْ السَّعَادَةِ: الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ،
تَرَاهَا فَتُعْجِبُكَ، وَتَغِيبُ عَنْهَا فَتَأْمَنُهَا عَلَى نَفْسِهَا وَمَالِكَ؛ وَالدَّابَّةُ
تَكُونُ وَطِئَةً، فَتُلْحِقُكَ بِأَصْحَابِكَ؛ وَالدَّارُ تَكُونُ وَاسِعَةً كَثِيرَةً
الْمُرَافِقُ؛ وَالْجَارُ الصَّالِحُ. وَمِنْ الشَّقَاءِ: الْمَرْأَةُ تَرَاهَا فَتَسُوؤُكَ، وَتَحْمِلُ
لِسَانَهَا عَلَيْكَ، وَإِنْ غِيبَتْ عَنْهَا لَمْ تَأْمَنُهَا عَلَى نَفْسِهَا وَمَالِكَ؛
وَالدَّابَّةُ تَكُونُ قَطُوفًا، فَإِنْ ضَرَبَتْهَا أَتَعَبَتْكَ، وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهَا لَمْ تُلْحِقْكَ
بِأَصْحَابِكَ؛ وَالدَّارُ تَكُونُ ضَيِّقَةً قَلِيلَةً الْمُرَافِقُ؛ وَالْجَارُ السَّوُّ.»

«There are four sources of happiness and four

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2176).

2 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī (in *Shu‘ab ul-Īmān*), at-Tirmithī, Ibn ‘Abd ur-Razzāq (in *al-Muṣannaḥ*), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 4409).

sources of misery. Among the sources of happiness are:

- ① A good wife who pleases you when you look at her; and when you are away from her, you trust her in regard to herself and your property.
- ② An easy ride that enables you to catch up with your companions.
- ③ A house that is spacious and of many facilities.
- ④ A good neighbor.

And among the sources of misery are:

- ① An evil wife who dismays you when you look at her, who uses her tongue against you, and who, when you are away from her, you would not trust her in regard to herself or your property.
- ② A stubborn ride that if you whip it would tire you, and if you leave it alone you would not be able to catch up with your companions.
- ③ A tight house of limited facilities.
- ④ An evil neighbor.¹

2. GOOD CHARACTER

One should seek a wife who is known to be of good character or who has been raised in a good moral atmosphere. In a *ḥadīth* similar to the earlier one by Abū Hurayrah, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تُنكِحُ الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى إِحْدَى خِصَالِ ثَلَاثَةٍ: تُنكِحُ الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى مَالِهَا، وَتُنكِحُ الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى جَمَالِهَا، وَتُنكِحُ الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى دِينِهَا. فَخُذْ ذَاتَ

¹ Recorded by al-Ḥākim. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1047 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 3056). The fourth item in this *ḥadīth* has been combined from another report recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Khaṭīb, and others, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 282 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 887). A shorter form of this *ḥadīth* is recorded by aṭ-Ṭayālīsī and verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1803 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 3629).

الدِّينِ وَالْخُلُقِ تَرَبَّتْ بِمِثْلِكَ.»

«A woman is (usually) married for one of three qualities: she is married for her wealth; she is married for her beauty; or she is married for her religion. So take the one of religion and manners — may your right hand then be prosperous.»¹

A woman of low moral standards should be avoided, even if she has other attractive qualities such as wealth or beauty.

Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ثَلَاثَةٌ يَدْعُونَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَلَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُمْ: رَجُلٌ كَانَتْ تَحْتَهُ أَمْرَأَةٌ سَيِّئَةُ الْخُلُقِ فَلَمْ يَطْلُقْهَا، وَرَجُلٌ كَانَ لَهُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مَالٌ فَلَمْ يُشْهَدْ عَلَيْهِ، وَرَجُلٌ أَتَى سَفِيهًا مَالَهُ.»

«There are three individuals that, when they supplicate to Allāh (ﷻ), their supplication is not answered: a man who has a wife of bad character but he does not divorce her, a man who lends money to another man without taking witnesses, and a man who gives money to a weak-minded person.»²

In this *ḥadīth*, “bad character” pertains mostly to qualities such as looseness and promiscuity, making the woman's conduct dubious and her chastity questionable. A man who keeps such a wife is a *dayyūth*. This will be discussed further in the second book of this series³, *in-shāʾ Allāh*.

¹ Recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān, Aḥmad, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 307).

² Recorded by al-Ḥākim, Abū Nuʿaym, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 3075 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1805).

³ See “Closer than a Garment” by the Author.

3. VIRGINITY

Virginity is not a condition for marriage, but is a recommended quality — provided that one has both options and that the women he is considering are equal in other respects. Virginity then becomes a weighing factor for a number of reasons that will be outlined in the subsequent sub-sections.

Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that when his father died ¹, he left behind nine girls that Jābir had to look after. Soon after that, Jābir married a non-virgin, and when the Prophet (ﷺ) met him he asked him, «تزوجت يا جابر؟» **Have you married, O Jābir?** He replied, “Yes.” He asked him, «بكرًا أم ثيبًا؟» **Is she virgin or non-virgin?** He replied, “Non-virgin.” He (ﷺ) then said:

«فهلَّا بَكَرًا ثَلَاثِيئَهَا وَثَلَاثِيئَكَ، وَثَلَاثِيئَهَا وَثَلَاثِيئَكَ؟»

«Shouldn't you have considered a virgin who plays with you and you with her, and she laughs with you and you with her?»

Jābir replied, “Indeed, my father ‘Abdullāh died leaving many daughters. I did not want to add to them another young girl like themselves, so I married a grown woman to take care of them and look after them.” Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) then said:

«فإِنَّكَ نَعَمَ مَا رَأَيْتَ، بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ خَيْرًا.»

«Indeed, you have made a good decision. May Allāh bless that tremendously for you.» ²

4. ABILITY TO BEAR CHILDREN

Since one of the important purposes of marriage is reproduction, it is recommended to marry a younger woman who would normally be

1 Jābir’s father, ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr Bin Ḥarām, was martyred in the battle of Uḥud. Jābir was then nineteen years old.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

more likely to bear many children. In turn, this is more likely to apply to virgins than non-virgins.

‘Abdullāh Bin Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تَزَوِّجُوا الْأَبْكَارَ، فَإِنَّهُنَّ أَعَذَبُ أَفْوَاهًا، وَأَنْثَى أَرْحَامًا، وَأَرْضَى بِالْيَسِيرِ.»

«Marry virgins, because they have sweeter mouths (i.e., speech) and more fertile wombs, and are easier to be satisfied with little wealth.» ¹

Ma‘qil Bin Yasār (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man came to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) and said, “I have encountered a woman of honor and beauty, but she cannot bear children. Should I marry her?” He said, «No!» After asking him two more times, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تَزَوِّجُوا الْوَدُودَ الْوَلُودَ، فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِرُ بِكُمْ.»

«Marry a woman who is loving and can bear many children, because I will boast of your numbers (on Resurrection Day).» ²

5. LOVING ATTITUDE

One should seek to marry a woman who is expected to have a loving and caring attitude toward her husband. This is normally possible to sense from her environment and family’s reputation. The above *ḥadīth* of Ma‘qil Bin Yasār (رضي الله عنه) alludes to this. Similarly, Abū Uthaynah aṣ-Ṣadaḥī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خَيْرُ نِسَائِكُمُ الْوَلُودُ الْوَدُودُ، الْمُوَاسِيَةُ الْمَوَاتِيَةَ، إِذَا اتَّقَيْنَ اللَّهَ. وَشَرُّ نِسَائِكُمُ الْمُتَبَرِّجَاتُ الْمُتَخَيَّلَاتُ، وَهُنَّ الْمُنَافِقَاتُ. لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْهُنَّ إِلَّا مِثْلُ الْغُرَابِ الْأَعَصَمِ.»

1 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kbīr*). Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 623 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 2939).

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and an-Nasā’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 2940 & *Irwā‘ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1784).

«The best of your women are those who are bearers of many children, loving (to their husbands), comforting, and tolerant — provided that they have *taqwā* of Allāh.

And the worst of your women are those who display their charms (to other than their husbands), and who walk with arrogance. Such are the hypocrites, and those of them who will enter *Jannah* are as rare as are the red-beaked and red-legged crows.»¹

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«نساءكم من أهل الجنة: الودود الولود العود على زوجها»

«Your women who will be of the dwellers of *Jannah* are those who are loving (to their husbands), bearers of many children, and caring toward their husbands.»²

6. CONTENTMENT

An important quality to be sought in a wife is contentment. A dissatisfied wife would make her husband miserable and push him to do anything to please her.

It is easier for a virgin than a non-virgin to be content with her husband’s financial situation and with what he gives her. Similar to Ibn Mas‘ūd’s earlier *ḥadīth*, Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«عليكم بالأبكار، فإنهن أنتق أرحاماً، وأعذب أفواهاً،

1 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī (in *as-Sunan*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 3330 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1849). The last part of it (about the crow) is also recorded by Aḥmad and others from ‘Amr Bin al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1850).

2 Recorded by Tammām ar-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Asākir, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 287).

وأقلّ خبياً، وأرضى باليسير.

«Seek (in marriage) virgins, because they have more fertile wombs, sweeter speech, less slyness, and are easily satisfied with little (wealth).»¹

And ‘Utbah Bin ‘Uwaym Bin Sā‘idah al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«عليكم بالأبكار، فإنهن أعذب أفواهاً، وأنتق أرحاماً، وأرضى باليسير.

«Marry virgins! They have sweeter speech, more fertile wombs, and are satisfied with little.»²

7. NAIVETY

Naivety, simplicity, and innocence of heart are commendable qualities to be sought in a wife, and are more present in virgins than non-virgins — because of their lesser experience in the ways of life. This is demonstrated in the above *ḥadīth* of Jābir (رضي الله عنه).

8. BEAUTY

Beauty, wealth, and prestige are all mentioned the earlier *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah (p. 22) as being secondary qualities that should not be sought at the cost of righteousness.

However, we cannot totally disregard these qualities — especially beauty. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خير النساء التي تسره إذا نظر، وتطيعه إذا أمر،

ولا تخالفه في نفسها ولا مالها بما يكره.»

«The best of women is that who pleases him (i.e., her

1 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Awsaṭ*) and aḍ-Diyā’ ul-Maḥdīsī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 624 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 4053).

2 Recorded by Ibn Mājah and others from Sā‘idah and Jābir. It is verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 623).

husband) when he looks at her, obeys him when he orders, and does not subject her person or money to what he dislikes.»¹

Similarly, ‘Abdullāh Bin Salām (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was asked, “Who are the best of women?” He replied:

«خير النساء من تسرك إذا أبصرت، وتطيعك إذا أمرت،

وتحفظ غيبتك في نفسها ومالك.»

«The best of women is that who pleases you when you look at her, obeys you when you order her, and safeguards you during your absence in regard to herself and your wealth.»²

A woman’s appearance being “pleasing” to her husband applies first to pleasing him when he observes her righteousness and obedience to Allāh. But it may also apply to pleasing him with her physical beauty. That is why it has been ordained to look at a woman when courting her, as we will discuss in the next chapter.

9. COMPATIBILITY

A man should seek a wife who is compatible with him, and a woman should seek a husband compatible with her. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تخيروا لنطفكم، فأنكِحوا الأكفاء وأنكِحوا إليهم.»

«Make a (good) choice for your seed: marry (women) who are compatible (to you), and marry (your daughters) to them (who are compatible).»³

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā’ī, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 3298 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1838).

2 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 3299 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1838).

3 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī

The question is in regard to the definition of compatibility. In general, it has two major requirements: *dīn* and character. These two qualities are among the required qualities for a wife that we discussed above, and are emphasized in Abū Hurayrah’s *ḥadīth* in the next section regarding the husband.

Dīn and character may not be compromised and are the focal point for compatibility. A man or woman who is lacking in either of them is a poor candidate and should not be considered.

Other qualities may add to the compatibility between the two spouses, but none of them can be considered mandatory. Among the examples of compatibility factors is age, language, financial status, family status, national background, etc.

However, one must understand that, except for *dīn* and character, all of the other qualities are secondary and should not be overplayed, especially if they would be used as grounds for discrimination based on race, social status, country of origin, etc.

With the above understanding, we can say that age is an important “secondary” compatibility factor. It could become major if the age difference is such as to prevent one of the two spouses from being able to fulfill the marital rights of his (or her) partner.

Qualities Sought in a Good Husband

DĪN AND GOOD CHARACTER

The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed the guardians of women to marry them to men of good *dīn* and character. When a man of known righteousness and good character seeks to marry a woman, he should be seriously considered.

Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Umar, and Abū Ḥātim al-Muzanī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أتاكم من ترضون دينه وخلقه فزوجوه،

إن لا تفعلوا تكن فتنة في الأرض وفساد عريض.»

(*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 2928 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1067).

«If a man comes to you seeking marriage, and you are satisfied with his *dīn* and character, marry him — lest a *fitnah* (harm) and great destruction become rampant on the earth.»¹

IS WEALTH IMPORTANT?

Unfortunately, when looking for a husband, the woman's family or *walī* first look at his bank account, instead of his *īmān*, *taqwā*, and *ʿaqīdah* (creed).

Furthermore, many of today's Muslim women have been affected by un-Islāmic ideologies. They do not seek a husband who has *taqwā* and good character, which would guarantee for them a lasting, loving relationship. Rather, they seek a husband who is affluent, has an prominent position, or holds a higher degree of education — all at the cost of religion, morals, and, eventually, happiness.

While we do not call on Muslims to live in poverty, we emphasize that wealth is a minor factor that should never be compared to *dīn* and manners. We should trust Allāh's (ﷻ) promise:

﴿وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ، إِنْ يَكُونُوا

فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ، وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ النور ٣٢

«Marry the unmarried among you and the righteous of your male and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allāh will enrich them from His favors. Allāh is Bountiful and Knowing.»²

Whereas Allāh gives such a generous and true promise to the righteous, there is absolutely no guarantee that he will not, in the blink of an eye, take away the wealth of a man who is non-religious and ungrateful to Him.

¹ Recorded by al-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 270 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1022).

² *An-Nūr* 24:32.

NO COMPARISON

When a woman marries a man with *dīn* and good character, she will not lose out in any respect: if he keeps her, he will do so in a good manner; and if he releases her, he will do so in a good manner. Furthermore, a man with *dīn* and good character will be a blessing for her and her children, and they will all help each other learn and improve in their *Dīn*.

A woman should avoid a man who does not have these attributes — especially if he is negligent of the prayers, drinks alcohol, commits *zinā*, or commits any of the other major sins. Wealth and social status should never be her main criteria in deciding for or against a husband.

Sahl Bin Saʿd as-Sāʿidī (رضي الله عنه) reported that once while the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting with some of his companions, a man passed by them. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked one of the companions, «ما تقولون في هذا؟» **What do you think of this man?** Some of them said, «This is from among the noble people. By Allāh, if he seeks marriage, he will be married; and if he intercedes, his intercession will be granted.» The Prophet (ﷺ) did not say anything. Another man then passed by them, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked, «ما تقولون في هذا؟» **What do you think of this man?** Some of them said, «This is one of the poor Muslims. It is expected that if he seeks marriage, he will not be married; if he intercedes, his intercession will not be granted; and if he speaks, no one will listen to him.» Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then said:

«هذا خيرٌ من ملء الأرض من مثل هذا.»

«This man is better than an earth-full of the likes of the other man!»¹

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

CHAPTER 3

COURTING

Definitions and Examples

DEFINITIONS

When a man finds a woman of good attributes for marriage, his next step would be to propose to her or her family. We call this “courting” or “*khiṭbah*”; it is the act of asking for a woman’s hand in marriage. Depending on the situation, the interested man may personally approach the woman or her representatives, or may ask some of his relatives or friends to represent him in that.

If a man’s proposal is accepted, the woman is considered “engaged” to him. This “engagement” counts as a legally unbinding attachment that precedes the full and binding attachment of the marriage contract.

Even though an approved *khiṭbah* is not legally binding upon the two involved parties, it still constitutes a mutual pledge for marriage; and breaking it without a valid reason would be an immoral act of dishonesty.

A valid reason for breaking a *khiṭbah* would be for the bride’s side to discover a serious problem in the bridegroom of which they were not aware when they gave their approval. Similarly, if the bridegroom discovers a problem in the bride that he did not know when he asked for her hand, he may take that as grounds for breaking the *khiṭbah*.

EXAMPLES FROM THE SUNNAH

In a *ḥadīth* that will be fully cited in the next chapter, a man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to marry a certain woman to him, and he (ﷺ) said:

«أَذْهَبْ فَقَدْ أُنْكَحْتُكَهَا بِمَا مَعَكَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.»

«Go (have her as wife); I marry her to you for the portion of Qur'ān that you have memorized.»¹

In the case of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), who was a virgin, the Prophet (ﷺ) proposed to her father. 'Urwah Bin az-Zubayr reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) asked for 'Ā'ishah's (رضي الله عنها) hand from her father Abū Bakr. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) said, "But indeed, I am your brother!" Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) replied:

«أَنْتَ أَخِي فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ وَكِتَابِهِ، وَهِيَ لِي حَلَالٌ.»

«You are my brother in regard to Allāh's *Dīn* and His Book. But as for her, she is permissible for me (to marry).»²

On the other hand, the Prophet (ﷺ) approached Umm Salamah directly. Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that when her 'iddah³ was over, Abū Bakr proposed to her and she refused him. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then sent someone to ask for her hand on his behalf and she agreed.⁴

Abū Bakr Bin Ḥaṣṣ reported that when Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was asked to propose on someone's behalf he would go to the woman's family and say:

«الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ. إِنْ فُلَانًا خَطَبَ إِلَيْكُمْ فُلَانَةً،

فَإِنْ أَنْكَحْتُمُوهُ فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَإِنْ رَدَدْتُمُوهُ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ.»

"All praise is due to Allāh, and may Allāh bestow His *ṣalāh* upon Muḥammad. Indeed, so-and-so is asking for the hand of so-and-so in marriage. If you marry her to him, praise be to Allāh (for facilitating this); and if you

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī. Al-Albānī (رحمته الله) indicated that, even though this is a report from 'Urwah who is a *tābī'ī*, he must have heard it from his aunt 'Ā'ishah or his mother Asmā' (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1818).

3 A woman's waiting period after her divorce or her husband's death before she may remarry.

4 Recorded by an-Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1819).

reject him, exalted is Allāh (Who is above all deficiencies that exist in His creation).»¹

Buraydah Bin al-Ḥaṣīb (رضي الله عنه) reported that a group of *al-Anṣār* told 'Alī (رضي الله عنه), "Why don't you consider Fāṭimah (for marriage)?" Acting upon their advice, he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) who asked him, «ما حاجتُ ابنِ أبي طالب؟» «What does the son of Abū Ṭālib need?» He replied, "O Allāh's Messenger! I came in regard to Fāṭimah the daughter of Allāh's Messenger." The Messenger (ﷺ) replied, «مرحباً وأهلاً.» «*Marḥaban wa-ahlan* — Welcome, and a family member,» and he said no more. 'Alī went back to that group of *al-Anṣār* who were waiting for him. They asked him, "What do you bring?" He said, "I do not know, except that he said to me, '*marḥaban wa-ahlan*.'" They said, "Just one of these two words would suffice you from Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ); he offered you the 'family' and 'vastness'." ²

THE *BID'AH* OF RECITING *AL-FĀṬIḤAH*

A widely spread practice among Muslims is that, when a man asks for a woman's hand and her family accepts his proposal, they all raise their hands and recite *al-Fāṭiḥah*. This practice is a *bid'ah* because it has no basis in the Sunnah or the practice of the *salaf*.

Looking at the Courted Woman

PERMISSION

When a man intends to marry a certain woman, and prior to formally proposing to her, it is permissible for him to look at her and see as much of her as is normally possible. This would help him make the

1 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1822).

2 Recorded by Ibn Sa'd, at-Ṭabarānī, and Ibn 'Asākir. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* pp. 173-174). A more complete version of this *ḥadīth* is cited in Chapter 5.

right decision and be sure that he truly is comfortable with her looks and would like to have her as wife.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that he was with the Prophet (ﷺ) when a man came to him and told him that he had just married a woman from the *Anṣar*. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, «أَنْظَرْتَ إِلَيْهَا؟» «Have you looked at her?» He replied, “No!” He (ﷺ) said:

«أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْهَا، فَإِنْ فِي أَعْيُنِ الْأَنْصَارِ شَيْءٌ» - يَعْنِي الصَّغَرُ

«Look at her, because there is something (a smallness) in the *Anṣār*'s eyes.»¹

Al-Mughīrah Bin Shu'bah and Anas Bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) reported that al-Mughīrah wanted to marry a woman, so Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to him:

«إِذْهَبْ فَانْظُرْ إِلَيْهَا فَإِنَّهُ أُخْرَى أَنْ يُؤَدَّمَ بَيْنَكُمَا.»

«Go look at her: it will then be more possible to have harmony between the two of you.»

He went to her house. She was inside her bedroom, and he met her parents and told them, “Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) instructed me to look at her.” They remained speechless, but the young woman raised one side of her bedroom's curtain and said, “I strongly reproach you! If Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) instructed you to look at me, look. But if he did not, do not!” He looked at her, and then married her. He later mentioned, “No other woman attained her status (of love) with me, even though I have married more than seventy women!”²

Muḥammad Bin Maslamah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا أُلْقِيَ فِي قَلْبِ امْرِئٍ خِطْبَةُ امْرَأَةٍ، فَلَا بَأْسَ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَيْهَا.»

«When it comes into a person's heart to court a woman, it is permissible for him to look at her.»³

¹ Recorded by Muslim, an-Nasā'ī, and others.

² Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 96).

³ Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī

Also, Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say:

«إِذَا خَطَبَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَرْأَةَ، فَإِنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ

مِنْهَا إِلَى مَا يَدْعُوهُ إِلَى نِكَاحِهَا فَلْيَفْعَلْ.»

«When one of you courts a woman, if he could see of her as much as would convince him to marry her, he should do so.»

Implementing this instruction, Jābir (رضي الله عنه) said:

“Afterwards, I wanted to marry a woman, so I used to hide to observe her — until I had seen that which led me to marrying her.”¹

CONDITIONS

It is prohibited for a man to look intently at a woman if he is not her *mahram*. Looking at a woman for the purpose of marrying her is an obvious exception to this rule and must, therefore, fulfill certain conditions.

Abū Ḥumayd as-Sā'idī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا خَطَبَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَرْأَةَ، فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَيْهَا

إِذَا كَانَ إِنَّمَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهَا لِحُطْبَتِهَا، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَا تَعْلَمُ.»

«When one of you courts a woman, it is permissible for him to look at her if he only looks because he seeks to marry her — even if she does not know (that he is watching her).»²

(*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 98).

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 99 & *Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1791).

² Recorded by Aḥmad and at-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 97).

From this and other texts, we derive the following conditions:

1. The difference between a casual look and the look of a man seeking marriage is that the latter is allowed to stare and repeat the look.
2. Looking should be for the purpose of marriage, and not for the purpose of fulfilling a desire or lust.
3. A man may only look at a woman who is available for him to marry, knowing that, should he propose, her family could possibly approve of him.
4. Looking should be without touching or *khulwah* (privately meeting with her).
5. Looking should be limited to the body parts that a woman is permitted to expose to strangers, namely, her face and hands.

Some scholars, based on the above *ḥadīth* of Jābir (p. 39), permit the man to look at more than the minimum that we specified above. We do not favor this opinion for a number of reasons. Most importantly, it could easily be abused by the sick-hearted, opening for them a wide gate for defaming or lusting after innocent women.

If a man finds that looking was not sufficient to give him a satisfactory idea about the woman that he intended to marry, he may appoint a woman from his relatives to look at her closely and tell him more about her.

EXCHANGING PHOTOGRAPHS

With the wide availability of photography nowadays, a frequently asked question is whether it is allowed for the interested couple to exchange photographs.

Before answering this question, we need to point out a few important matters:

1. Photographs or pictures of beings with souls are generally

prohibited in Islām. They are only allowed in situations of definite *maṣlahah* (benefit) for the Muslims, and only when no other permissible means can fulfill the same purpose as they do.

2. Even if a photograph was classified as being permissible in a particular situation, it may not show a prohibited thing, such as a woman without full *ḥijāb*.
3. When a courter looks at a woman that he wishes to marry, his looking can be controlled by her or her *walī*, so that it would not invade her privacy or exceed what is permissible. To the contrary, a man can stare at a woman's photograph longer, show it to others who are not supposed to see it, and keep it in his possession even if the courting negotiations do not reach a successful conclusion. This leads to a serious harm for the woman — with her private photographs becoming widely accessible for whoever cares to view them.

For all of the above, exchanging photographs is not permissible — except in situations where one of the woman's *maḥrams* would show her photograph to the courter without leaving it in his possession.

IS A WOMAN ALLOWED TO LOOK?

Just as a man is allowed to look at his intended wife, a woman is allowed to look at her intended husband — with the above conditions, and noting that a man's *'awrah* extend from his navel to his knees. However, unlike men, a woman's looking should reflect a certain level of modesty and reservation that are characteristic of her femininity.

TALKING AND CORRESPONDENCE

Talking and correspondence are permissible between a man and a woman whom he is seriously considering for marriage. However, this should be done under controlled conditions: in the presence and watch of the woman's *walī* or his representative, avoiding *khulwah*, touching, or other prohibitions, and limiting it to what is necessary for helping the couple make their decision.

WOES OF INTERNET COURTING

The Internet is one of the newest and most powerful communication tools that were ever conceived by humanity. The average person nowadays spends many hours every week on the Internet: surfing, searching, reading, writing, learning, chatting, buying, selling, and so on. It is not surprising, then, that many individuals look for spouses in this wonderful land! Men and women “chat”, e-mail one another, and even exchange digitized pictures!

However, courting and marrying over the Internet often has negative results. It involves many sinful or questionable practices, among which are the following:

1. Each individual paints about himself or herself an unreal picture that is meant to impress the other side. One describes what he (or she) wishes to be, not what one really is! Being in a private room with a keyboard and a monitor provides a big chance for pretence. Thus, lying and deceit are prevalent in this kind of communication. Asmā' (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«المتشبع بما لم يُعطِ كلابس ثوبي زور.»

«A person who pretends having that which he does not is like one who wears two garments of deception.»¹

2. As we will see in the next chapter, a woman's *walī* is normally responsible for investigating about a prospective husband's family, friends, manners, finances, etc. With Internet courting, on the other hand, a woman forsakes all of this and makes herself the ultimate judge, allowing her emotions and the courter's cunning to make one of the most important decisions of her lifetime!
3. A great deal of precious time is wasted in writing polished e-mails and exchanging worthless “chats”. ‘Abdullāh Bin Mas‘ūd and Abū Burazah (رضي الله عنهما) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

«لا تزولُ قدما ابن آدم يوم القيامة من عند ربه حتى يُسأل عن

خمس: عن عمره فيم أفناه، وعن شبابه (أو جسمه) فيم أبلاه،

وعن ماله من أين اكتسبه وفيم أنفقه، وماذا عمل فيما علم؟»

«A human being's feet will not depart from before his Lord, on Resurrection Day, until he is questioned about five things: his lifetime and how he consumed it, his youth and body and how he utilized it, his wealth and how he earned and spent it, and what he did in regard to what he knew.»¹

4. Digitized pictures are often exchanged. As indicated above, this practice is largely prohibited, especially since digitized pictures can be easily and permanently stored on the computer, and electronically exchanged with other “interested” individuals.
5. In many cases, the Internet communication takes place between a man and a married woman (often with children)! The woman starts seeing her husband's mistakes well magnified, and her Internet chatter grows in her thoughts into a perfect hero that will surely save her from the miserable life with her husband. We have witnessed a number of such cases that ended in divorce, or in the woman running away from her husband's house to join the hero that she never met! As we will see in the next section, turning a woman against her husband is a great sin.

Because of the above and many other reasons, Internet courting is a dangerous practice that should be largely avoided by the righteous Muslims.

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 946).

Prohibited Courting

COURTING A MARRIED WOMAN

It is prohibited to court a woman who is married. The same is true about a woman whose husband divorced her a non-final divorce (a first or second time) and she is still in her *'iddah* (waiting period). The reason for this is that in both cases she is considered under the authority of her husband, and no other man may challenge that authority.

It is indeed a great sin to turn a woman against her husband with the intention of marrying her. Abū Hurayrah and Buraydah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ خَبَّبَ امْرَأَةً عَلَى زَوْجِهَا، أَوْ عَبْدًا عَلَى سَيِّدِهِ.»

«He is not one of us who turns a woman against her husband or a slave against his master.»¹

COURTING A WOMAN WHO IS BEING COURTED

When a Muslim man is proposing to a woman, it is not permissible for other Muslims to propose to her. They should wait until her side (she, her family, or her representative) takes a clear position from the proposal: either acceptance or rejection. If that proposal is rejected, others may then approach her for marriage.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ، فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا، وَلَا تَنَافَسُوا، وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلَا يَخْطُبِ الرَّجُلُ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ أَخِيهِ حَتَّى يَنْكَحَ أَوْ يَتْرُكَ.»

«Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales. Do not spy, nor look for the faults (of each

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5436, 5437, 6223, & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 324, 325).

other), nor oppose each other, nor envy one another, nor hate one another, nor desert each other — and, O Servants of Allāh, be (true) brothers. Let not a man court a woman whom his brother is courting: (He should wait) until he marries or leaves her.»¹

‘Uqbah Bin ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«الْمُؤْمِنُ أَخُو الْمُؤْمِنِ، فَلَا يَحِلُّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يَتَنَاعَ عَلَى بَيْعِ أَخِيهِ، وَلَا يَخْطُبَ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ أَخِيهِ، حَتَّى يَذَرَ.»

«A believer is a brother to another believer. It is not permissible for a believer to negotiate a deal that his brother is negotiating, nor propose to a woman to whom his brother is proposing — until he leaves.»²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا يَخْطُبُ أَحَدُكُمْ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ أَخِيهِ، حَتَّى يَنْكَحَ أَوْ يَتْرُكَ.»

«Let not any of you propose to a woman to whom his brother is proposing. (He should wait) until he marries or quits.»³

‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا يَبِيعُ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَيْعِ بَعْضٍ، وَلَا يَخْطُبُ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ بَعْضٍ.»

«Let none of you negotiate a deal that is being negotiated by another one, nor propose to a woman to whom another one is proposing.»⁴

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by Muslim.

³ Recorded by an-Nasā'ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1817 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1030).

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, an-Nasā'ī, and others.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يَخْطُبُ الرَّجُلُ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ أَخِيهِ، وَلَا يَسُومُ عَلَى سَوْمِ أَخِيهِ، وَلَا تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ عَلَى عَمَّتِهَا وَلَا عَلَى خَالَتِهَا، وَلَا تَسْأَلُ الْمَرْأَةُ طَلَاقَ أَخْتِهَا لِتَكْفِيَ صَحْفَتَهَا وَلِتُنْكَحَ، فَإِنَّمَا لَهَا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهَا.»

«Let not a man propose to a woman to whom his brother is proposing, nor negotiate a deal that his brother is negotiating. A woman may not be married to a man who is married to her paternal or maternal aunt. A woman should not request that her sister be divorced so that she would fill her own plate (with food — if she is a co-wife) or get married (instead of her), because she will only receive what Allāh has prescribed for her.»¹

OTHER PROHIBITED FORMS

The following forms of courting are also prohibited:

1. A man who has four wives may not court an additional woman — unless he divorces one or more of his wives.
2. A man is not allowed to court a woman whom he is not allowed to simultaneously marry with a current wife, such as her sister or aunt.
3. A man who had divorced a wife three times is not allowed to court or consider her unless she married after him another man who, after consummating their marriage, willfully divorces her.
4. A woman who is in her 'iddah from a husband's death or a terminal divorce² may not be approached with direct proposals

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² This includes a third and final divorce, or marriage termination through *khul'* (upon her request) or *faskh* (by the judge's decree).

before the end of her 'iddah. She may only be approached by a subtle hint, such as telling her, "When you finish your 'iddah, a man with just a few children may want to marry you." Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ؛ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ، وَلَكِنْ لَا تُؤَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا؛ وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ، وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ، وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ» ﴿البقرة ٢٣٥﴾

«There is no blame upon you for that to which you (indirectly) allude concerning a proposal to women, nor for what you conceal within yourselves. Allāh knows that you are going to remember them. But do not promise them secretly except for saying a proper saying. And do not decide to undertake a marriage contract until the decreed period reaches its end. And know that Allāh knows what is within yourselves, so beware of Him. And know that Allāh is Forgiving and Tolerant.»¹

Offering a Woman for Marriage

It is permissible for a man to offer his daughter or the woman under his custody for marriage to those whom he trusts as being worthy of her.

'Abdullāh Bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that after the death of his sister Ḥafṣah's husband, Khunays Bin Ḥuthāfah as-Sahmī (رضي الله عنه), 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) offered Ḥafṣah (رضي الله عنها) to 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه). A few nights later, 'Uthmān apologized, "I have decided not to marry right now." 'Umar then offered her to Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), and he did not give him an answer either. This saddened 'Umar; but the Prophet (ﷺ) consoled him

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:235.

saying:

«يَتَزَوَّجُ حَفْصَةَ مَنْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عُثْمَانَ،

وَيَتَزَوَّجُ عُثْمَانُ مَنْ هِيَ خَيْرٌ مِنْ حَفْصَةَ.»

«One who is better than 'Uthmān will marry Ḥafṣah, and 'Uthmān will marry one who is better than Ḥafṣah.^{1 2}

A few nights later, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him for her hand, and 'Umar accepted. Later on, Abū Bakr met 'Umar and asked him, "You were probably bothered when you offered me Ḥafṣah and I did not give you an answer." 'Umar said, "Yes!" Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) then explained:

"Truly, what had prevented me from giving you an answer when you offered her to me was that I knew that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) had mentioned (marrying) her, and I was not to expose Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) secret. Had he declined marrying her, I would surely have accepted her."³

Allāh (ﷻ) tells us about another case where a righteous man offered one of his two daughters in marriage to Mūsā (عليه السلام):

«قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنكِحَكَ إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ عَلَى أَنْ تَأْجُرَنِي

ثَمَنِي حَبَجٍ، فَإِنْ أَتَمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ» الْقِصَصُ ٢٧

«He said, "Indeed, I wish to marry to you one of these two daughters of mine, on condition that you serve me for (at least) eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be (a favor) from you."⁴

1 The Prophet (ﷺ) meant his daughter Umm Kulthūm (رضي الله عنها).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Ibn Sa'd (*Faṭḥ ul-Bārī* no. 5122).

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, an-Nasā'ī, and others.

4 *Al-Qaṣaṣ* 28:27.

Performing *Istikhārah* and Seeking Advice

DESCRIPTION OF ISTIKHĀRAH

Istikhārah means seeking good through putting one's complete trust in Allāh. A believer should perform *istikhārah* before starting any important undertaking. Since marriage is one of the most important decisions that a person takes, it is important for both the man and woman to perform *istikhārah* before they give the final word that binds them together.

Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to teach his companions to perform *istikhārah* in all of their affairs — as though he was teaching them a *sūrah* from the Qur'an. He told them:

«إِذَا هُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ، فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ، ثُمَّ لِيَقُلْ:

”اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ، وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ

فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ، وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَامُ

الْغُيُوبِ. اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ (وَيُسَمِّيهِ بِاسْمِهِ) هُوَ

خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي، وَعَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِي وَعَاجِلُهُ، فَأَقْدِرْهُ

لِي، وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ. وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ

لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي، وَعَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِي وَعَاجِلُهُ، فَأَصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي،

وَأَصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ، وَأَقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ رَضِّنِي بِهِ.” وَمَا

نَدِمَ مِنْ أَسْتَخَارِ الْخَالِقِ، وَشَاوَرَ الْمَخْلُوقِينَ، وَتَشَبَّهَ فِي أَمْرِهِ.»

«When one of you is about to do something (important), let him pray two non-obligatory *rak'āt* and then say:

“*Allāhumma innī astakhīruka bi-ilmika, wa-astaqdiruka bi-qudratika, wa-as'aluka min fadlik al-aẓīm, fa-innaka taqdiru wa-lā aqdir, wa-ta'lamu wa-lā a'lam, wa-anta 'allām ul-ghuyūb. Allāhumma in*

kunta ta'lamu anna hātha 'l-'amra (and he names his intended affair) *huwa khayrun lī fī dīnī wa-mā'āshī, wa-'āqibati amrī wa-'ājilihī wa-'ājilihī, fa-qdurhu lī, wa-yassirhu lī, thumma bārik lī fih. Wa-in kunta ta'lamu anna hātha 'l-'amra huwa sharrun lī fī dīnī wa-mā'āshī, wa-'āqibati amrī wa-'ājilihī wa-'ājilihī, fa-ṣrifhu 'annī wa-ṣrifnī 'anhu, wa-qdur liy-al-khayra haythu kān, thumma raḍḍinī bih —*

O Allāh, I ask You to choose for me with Your knowledge and decree for me with Your might, and I ask You of Your great favor. Indeed, You decree and I do not, and You know and I do not; You surely are the Knower of all that is hidden. O Allāh, if You know that this affair (and he names it) is good for me in regard to my religion, my living, and its outcome — both immediate and future, decree it, facilitate it, and then bless it for me. And if You know that this affair is harmful for me in regard to my religion, my living, and its outcome — both immediate and future, divert it from me and divert me from it, and decree for me good wherever it may be, and then make me content by it.”

And indeed, never would he regret who asks the Creator to choose for him, and consults with the creation, and ascertains his actions.¹

From this *ḥadīth*, it is obvious that the *istikhārah* is a special *du'ā* that has the following characteristics:

1. It is said when intending to perform an important act, and just before embarking on that act, with the expectation that Allāh (ﷻ) will choose the best.
2. It is preceded with a voluntary prayer consisting of two *rak'āt*. One may raise one's hands while saying it — as is recommended for any *du'ā*.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and others.

3. After a person makes *istikhārah*, he should undertake what he was planning to do before it. If that is good for Him, Allāh (ﷻ) would surely facilitate it, otherwise, He would bring about some circumstances to hinder it.
4. Contentment with its outcome may not be felt immediately, but will surely materialize with time.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT *ISTIKHĀRAH*

- a. A misconception concerning *istikhārah* is that it is made when a person is undetermined between two or more alternatives. It is clear from the above *ḥadīth* that it should only be made after he had decided which of the alternative to undertake.
- b. Some people think that one of the important requirements of *istikhārah* is to perform it just before going to sleep, and that some dreams should indicate what to do.
- c. Other people think that the *istikhārah* puts in the heart an inclination toward the proper choice.

There is no basis for either of these two assumptions, and the above *ḥadīth* supports neither. In fact, the *ḥadīth* indicates that when, as a result of the *istikhārah*, Allāh hinders an affair that a person was about to undertake, that might bring some dislike into his heart, and he therefore asks Allāh to give him contentment.

SEEKING ADVICE

We have seen from the above *ḥadīth* that, in addition to *istikhārah*, it is recommended to consult with some knowledgeable people before making an important decision.

Thus it is recommended for the man and woman (or her *walī*) to investigate about his or her intended partner, making sure that she or he has the required good attributes.

When a person's advice is sought in regard to individuals that are considered for marriage, business partnership, etc, he should provide

truthful and honest advice. This advice should be limited to matters relevant to the affair in question, and should not be exceeded to other areas because that may then count as a prohibited form of backbiting.

Fāṭimah Bint Qays (رضي الله عنها) reported that her husband 'Amr Bin Ḥafṣ (رضي الله عنه) sent 'Ayyāsh Bin Abī Rabī'ah (رضي الله عنه) to deliver to her a third and final divorce, and he sent with him a quantity of dates and barley as a present to her. She protested to 'Ayyāsh and requested more support, but he responded, "By Allāh, you do not deserve support unless you were pregnant." She went complaining to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), and he asked her, «كم طلقكِ؟» **How many times did he divorce you?** She replied, "Three times." He said, «He is right, then — he does not owe you any support (because the marriage was terminal).»

The Prophet (ﷺ) told her to spend her 'iddah in Umm Sharīk's (رضي الله عنها) house, but then remembered that some of his male companions go into her house. So he said:

«أَعْتَدِي فِي بَيْتِ ابْنِ عَمِّكَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ابْنِ أُمِّ مَكْتُومٍ، فَإِنَّهُ رَجُلٌ ضَرِيرُ الْبَصَرِ، وَإِنْكِ إِذَا وَضَعْتَ خِمَارَكَ لَمْ يَرِكَ. فَإِذَا انْقَضَتْ عِدَّتُكَ فَادْنِينِي.»

«Spend your 'iddah in the house of your cousin 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm's. Indeed, he is a blind man, and when you remove your head-cover, he cannot see you. When you complete your 'iddah, inform me.»

When she completed her 'iddah, Fāṭimah went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him that both Mu'āwiyah Bin Abī Sufyān and Abū Jahm asked for her hand. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَمَّا أَبُو جَهْمٍ، فَمِنْهُ شِدَّةٌ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضَعُ الْعَصَا عَنْ عَاتِقِهِ، وَأَمَّا مُعَاوِيَةُ فَصَعْلُوكٌ خَفِيفُ الْحَالِ، انْكَحِي أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ.»

«As for Abū Jahm, he is harsh with women, and never takes the stick off his shoulder; and as for Mu'āwiyah, he is a poor man without any money. Marry Usāmah Bin Zayd.»

She disliked that, but the Prophet (ﷺ) repeated, «انْكَحِي أُسَامَةَ بْنَ زَيْدٍ.» **«Marry Usāmah Bin Zayd.»** She concluded:

“Then I married Usāmah; Allāh put a great deal of good in him, and I was very happy with him.”¹

TELLING THE TRUTH

As we indicated above, it is important to provide truthful information in regard to the two individuals involved in a *khiṭbah*. The information should be limited to matters that are expected to have a bearing on the marriage. Absolute truth is required from the two involved parties: the man seeking to marry and the woman being sought, as well as their representatives, and any other individuals who are asked for advice.

Hiding any problems that one knows about is a sinful act of mistrust in Islām, and could result in numerous future predicaments.

For instance, one is required to indicate any physical problem in the two individuals involved in the *khiṭbah*. If either of them has a physical deficiency, such as impotence, venereal diseases, etc., he (or she) should make it known to the other individual before approving the engagements.

As for the one who thus learns about some problems in the other person, he is not allowed to publicize that knowledge or expose those secrets.

Violations in *Khiṭbah*

There are many violations that some Muslims have introduced into the process of *khiṭbah*. Many of those violations arise from blind imitation of the non-Muslims. In what follows we mention a few of them:

1. PRIVACY & INTIMACY BETWEEN THE ENGAGED COUPLE

After the engagement, and before the marriage contract, the woman's family permit her to go out with the “fiancée”, have *khulwah* with him,

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

and even touch and kiss him.

Some people think of the engagement as a "test-drive" period in which they fully try out their partners to see if they will be able to pursue a long life together. With that, they commit many sins, minor and major, including *zinā*. And interestingly, many of these engagements prove unsuccessful and end up in separation before marriage!

Some families like to extend the engagement period to months or even years, thereby providing more chance for the engaged couple to fall into sinning.

2. ENGAGEMENT PARTY

In many Muslim countries, the *khiṭbah* is held publicly in the form of a reception or party in which drinks are served, music is played, and the bridegroom kisses the bride or takes pictures with her. All of that is in great discord with the Sunnah and the Islāmic teachings, and should therefore be totally avoided.

Furthermore, a *khiṭbah* should stay away from the people's eyes because no legal *shar'ī* consequences result from it. If, for any reason, a publicized *khiṭbah* is not concluded with actual marriage, serious harm may result from publicizing it, especially in regard to the bride's reputation.

3. ENGAGEMENT RINGS AND JEWELRY

The engaged couple often exchange "engagement" rings, and the bridegroom gives the bride jewelry and gifts at the time of *khiṭbah*. This is in violation of Islām, since there is no reason yet for any property or gift exchange to take place — until they are legally bound by the marriage contract. In many cases, this premature act leads to serious disputes if the engagement is broken for any reason.

Furthermore, the "engagement" ring has no basis in Islām. It originates from an old Christian practice that the Muslims should not imitate.

CHAPTER 4

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Introduction

IMPORTANCE OF THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

The marriage (or *nikāḥ*) contract is enacted between a man and woman for the purpose of enjoying each other and forming a good family.

The marriage contract is the formal bond that turns two individuals from strangers to husband and wife. As a result of the marriage contract, many rights and obligations become imperative and many fruits are anticipated.

To many people, the marriage contract is the most important contract they execute throughout their lives. Each marriage contract normally carries a lasting effect over a large number of individuals, many of them yet to be born.

Since the marriage contract has such a great and solemn significance, Islām imposes a number of guidelines that it must fulfill. Those guidelines are the subject of discussion in this chapter.

NO JOKING IN MARRIAGE

Marriage is a serious matter and should be dealt with seriously. It is not allowed for a man to marry and then claim that he did not really mean it or that he was joking.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ثَلَاثُ جِدْهَنْ جِدٌّ وَهَزْلُهُنَّ جِدٌّ: النِّكَاحُ، وَالطَّلَاقُ، وَالرَّجْعَةُ.»

There are three matters that are considered serious in both serious and non-serious talk: marriage, divorce, and returning (a wife who was divorced a

non-terminal divorce).»¹

Fuḍālah Bin 'Ubayd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ثلاث لا يجوز اللعبُ فيهن: الطلاقُ والنكاحُ والعَتَقُ.»

«There are three matters in which it is not permissible to joke: marriage, divorce, and emancipation (of slaves).»²

BASIC ELEMENTS

As is shown in the following chart, the Islāmic marriage contract has six conditions, two pillars, one obligation, and one optional element. Dropping a condition or a pillar invalidates the contract. Intentionally dropping the obligation is a sin.

Conditions	1	Bridegroom's eligibility
	2	Bride's eligibility
	3	Bridegroom's consent
	4	Bride's consent or permission
	5	Walī's approval
	6	Presence of two witnesses
Pillars	1	The offering (<i>ṭijāb</i>)
	2	The acceptance (<i>qabūl</i>)
Obligation	◇	The dowry
Optional Element	◇	Imposed conditions

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1826 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3027).

² Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*). Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1826 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3047).

These elements are discussed in the following sections.

Bridegroom's Eligibility

To be eligible for marriage, the bridegroom should fulfill the following requirements:

a	Must be a Muslim male
b	Should be chaste
c	Should be sane
d	Should have attained puberty
e	May not be related to the bride by a permanently prohibiting blood, milk, or marital relationship (see Chapter 8)
f	May not be related to the bride by a temporarily prohibiting marital relationship (see Chapter 8)
g	Must perform the contact willfully and not by compulsion

Bride's Eligibility

To be eligible for marriage, the bride should fulfill the following requirements:

a	Must be a Muslim, Christian, or Jewish female
b	Should be chaste
c	Should be sane
d	May not be married or still in 'iddah from another man
e	May not be related to the groom by a permanently prohibiting blood, milk, or marital relationship (see Chapter 8)

f	May not be related to the groom by a temporarily prohibiting marital relationship (see Chapter 8)
g	Must perform the contact willfully and not by compulsion (discussed further in the next section)

The Bride's Permission

RULING

Being one of the two individuals involved in a marriage contract, the bride should have a say in regard to the partner with whom she would be associated in a long-term partnership.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اسْتَأْمِرُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي أَبْضَاعِهِنَّ.»

‘Take the women’s permission in regard to their private parts (i.e., marriage).’¹

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا أَرَادَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَزُوجَ ابْنَتَهُ فَلْيَسْتَأْمِرْهَا.»

‘When one of you wants to give his daughter in marriage, he should take her permission.’²

A bride’s permission is a required element of the marriage contract. Without this permission, the contract is either null and void, or may be invalidated by the Islāmic authorities — based on the bride’s request.

We will see below that, depending on the bride’s situation, the

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad and an-Nasā’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 930 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 398).

² Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) and Abū Ya’lā. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 300 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1206).

mode of her permission varies from being fully vocal and assertive to being passive and compliant with her *walī*’s decision.

A VIRGIN BRIDE

A virgin bride (in Arabic: *bikr*) is a woman who never had intercourse with men. That would normally mean that her virginity hymen is present and intact; however, this is not an absolute condition because some virgins may lose their hymen in an accident or illness.

A virgin is usually naive and inexperienced in the ways of life and people’s cunning. She has no knowledge about men and is unable to evaluate a potential husband. Thus, it is not possible for her to make a clear decision in that regard, and it is left for her *walī*, who is usually her father, to make the decision on her behalf. Even then, he must consult with her and take her approval before executing the marriage contract.

When a virgin is adorned with the strong *ḥayā* (modesty and shyness) that adorned the early Muslim virgins, she would be extremely reluctant to voice her opinion in regard to a man who seeks to marry her. In that case, her passive expression of approval is sufficient.

A passive approval is expressed by the bride’s remaining silent, nodding her head, or making any other motion to indicate that she does not object to the marriage. On the other hand, if she does object, she must declare that with a clear action or statement.

The bride’s passive approval is the minimum required permission. However, it is possible for her to express her approval in a more assertive way, such as saying, “Yes, I would like to marry him.”

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لَا تُنْكَحُ الشَّيْبُ (الْأَيُّمُ) حَتَّى تُسْتَأْمَرَ، وَلَا تُنْكَحُ الْبِكْرُ حَتَّى

تُسْتَأْذَنَ، وَإِذْنُهَا الصُّمُوتُ (أَنْ تَسْكُتَ).»

‘A non-virgin woman (i.e., widow or divorcee) may not be married without her instruction; and a virgin may not be married without her permission, and her

silence indicates her consent.»¹

‘Umayrah al-Kindī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«آمروا النساء في أنفسهن، فَإِنَّ الثَّيْبَ تُعْرَبُ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا
(بِلِسَانِهَا)، وَالْبِكْرُ رِضَاهَا صَمَتُهَا (صِمَاتُهَا).»

‘Take the women’s permission in regard to themselves (i.e., marriage). A non-virgin expresses herself with her tongue; and a virgin’s silence is (a sufficient proof of) her acceptance.»²

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“A virgin woman came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him that her father gave her in marriage against her will. The Prophet (ﷺ) then gave her the choice (of maintaining or terminating the marriage).”³

A NON-VIRGIN BRIDE

A non-virgin bride (in Arabic: *thayyib*) is a woman who has had at least one sexual intercourse with men — whether it was in regular marriage or *zinā*.

A *thayyib* normally has more experience in life and more ability to make a decision in regard to her marriage. Thus, she should be allowed to voice her opinion and make her decision, and her decision must be honored by her *walī*. This is clearly expressed in the above *ḥadīths*. Similarly, Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«الثَّيْبُ (الْأَيِّمُ) أَحَقُّ بِنَفْسِهَا مِنْ وَلِيِّهَا، وَالْبِكْرُ تُسْتَأْذَنُ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 13, 3084 & *Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1836).

³ Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Mājah* no. 1520).

فِي نَفْسِهَا، وَإِذْنُهَا صُمَاتُهَا.»

‘A non-virgin has more right to herself than does her guardian; as for a virgin, her permission is taken in regard to herself, and her silence is (a sufficient) permission.»¹

Al-Khansā’ Bint Khithām al-Anṣariyyah (رضي الله عنه) reported that her father gave her in marriage (without her permission). At that time, she was non-virgin. She disliked that marriage and complained to the Prophet (ﷺ) who invalidated the contract.²

AN ORPHAN BRIDE

An orphan girl is a virgin who lost her father. Thus, her *walī* is not her father. In regard to the permission for marriage, she is given more say than a normal virgin.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«آمروا الْيَتِيمَةَ فِي نَفْسِهَا، وَإِذْنُهَا صُمَاتُهَا.»

‘Give a (virgin) orphan girl the right to decide in regard to herself (in marriage), and her silence is (a sufficient) permission.»³

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تُسْتَأْمَرُ الْيَتِيمَةُ فِي نَفْسِهَا، فَإِنْ سَكَتَتْ (صَمَتَتْ)
فَهُوَ إِذْنُهَا، وَإِنْ أَبَتْ فَلَا جَوَازَ عَلَيْهَا.»

‘A (virgin) orphan girl’s permission should be sought in regard to herself (i.e., in marriage); if she remains

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad, and others.

³ Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 14 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 656).

silent, that counts as her permission; and if she expresses her refusal, she may not be forced against her will.>¹

‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that when ‘Uthmān Bin Maz‘ūn (رضي الله عنه) died he left behind a daughter from his wife Khuwaylah Bint Ḥakīm. In his will, ‘Uthmān had appointed his brother Qudāmah Bin Maz‘ūn as her guardian. Ibn ‘Umar asked for the orphan girl’s hand from Qudāmah (who was his maternal uncle), and Qudāmah agreed to marry her to him. However, al-Mughīrah Bin Shu‘bah (رضي الله عنه) approached her mother and beguiled her with money. The mother thus leaned toward him, and her daughter followed her mother’s inclination and refused to marry Ibn ‘Umar. They disputed and went before the Prophet (ﷺ). Qudāmah said:

“O Allāh’s Messenger! She is my brother’s daughter. He appointed me as her guardian, and I gave her in marriage to ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar — forsaking neither righteousness nor compatibility. However, she is only a woman, and she now leans according to her mother’s inclination.”

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) responded:

«هي يتيمّة، ولا تُنكحُ إلا بإذنها.»

«She is an orphan, and she may not be married except with her permission.»

Ibn ‘Umar added:

“Thus, by Allāh, she was taken away from me, even after I had taken charge of her (by marriage), and was married to al-Mughīrah Bin Shu‘bah.”²

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 1349, 8194 & *Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1834).

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, ad-Dāraqūnī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī

A FREED SLAVE WOMAN

If a married couple were both slaves, and the woman is freed first, she would be given the option of staying with her husband or leaving him. If she makes the first choice, she remains married to him and would have no further chance in that regard.

Barīrah was a slave woman owned by some of *al-Anṣār*. She was married to a black slave called Mughīth.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) told her in regard to Barīrah, «خذيها فأعتقها.» **Take her and free her.** So she bought her from her owners and freed her. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) then gave her the choice of remaining married to her husband or going on her own. She chose to be on her own.¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) also reported that when Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) gave Barīrah the choice he told her, «إن قريك فلا خيار لك.» **If he approaches you, then you will have no choice.**²

Barīrah’s departure broke Mughīth’s heart. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated, “It is as if I still see him following her in the streets of al-Madīnah, crying until his tears wet his beard.” Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يا عباس! ألا تعجب من حب مغيثٍ بريرة،

ومن بغضٍ بريرةً مُغيثاً؟»

«O ‘Abbās! Does it not surprise you how much Mughīth loves Barīrah, and how much Barīrah dislikes Mughīth?»

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said to Barīrah, «لو راجعته.» **Would you consider taking him back?** She said, “O Allāh’s Messenger, is this a command?” He said, «إنما أشفعُ.» **I am only interceding (for his sake).** She said, “I have no interest in him then.”³

(*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1835).

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 3201).

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and others.

The Woman's *Walī*

RULING

A woman may not independently give herself in marriage. Her *walī* (guardian) should represent her in doing that. He should take her consent if she is a virgin. Otherwise, he should follow her instruction.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, 'Abdullāh Bin 'Abbās, Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh, and Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لَا نِكَاحَ إِلَّا بِوَلِيٍّ . »

«A marriage (contract) is not valid without a *walī*.»¹

Thus, the presence of the *walī* for the execution of the marriage contract is a condition for its validity.

WHO IS A WOMAN'S *WALĪ*?

Normally, a woman's *walī* is her father. If, for any reason, her father is unable to be her *walī*, her *walī* would then be her next closest *maḥram* (grandfather, son, brother, uncle, etc).

If the woman's close relatives are non-Muslims, they may not be her *shar'ī* guardians. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾»

«Allāh will never grant to the unbelievers a way (of authority) over the believers»²

A woman may not take another woman as her *walī*. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1839).

² *An-Nisā* 4:141.

« لَا تُزَوِّجُ الْمَرْأَةُ الْمَرْأَةَ ، وَلَا تُزَوِّجُ الْمَرْأَةُ نَفْسَهَا . »

«A woman may not give another woman in marriage, nor may a woman give herself in marriage.»

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) added:

«فَإِنَّ الزَّانِيَةَ هِيَ الَّتِي تُزَوِّجُ نَفْسَهَا.»

“For, indeed, it is an adulteress who gives herself in marriage (without her *walī*'s consent).”¹

If the bride does not have a Muslim blood-relative as *walī*, the Islāmic authority, represented by the ruler or judge, would appoint a *walī* for her. In many non-Muslim countries, the local *imām* of a Muslim community carries out the common duties of an Islāmic judge, and would therefore be the *walī* of a woman who has no *walī*.

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لَا نِكَاحَ إِلَّا بِوَلِيٍّ ، وَالسُّلْطَانُ وَلِيٌّ مَنْ لَا وَلِيَّ لَهُ . »

«A marriage (contract) is not valid without a *walī*. And the (Islāmic) authority is the *walī* of the one who does not have a *walī*.»²

A WOMAN MAY NOT APPOINT HER *WALĪ*

A common practice in many non-Islāmic countries is that a woman, having no Muslim *maḥram* as *walī*, would appoint her own *walī*. This is wrong, and she has no right to do so. As we saw above, this is the right of the Islāmic judge or *imām*.

This incorrect practice has caused a number of bad consequences, among which are the following:

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1841).

² Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1840).

1. The appointed *walī* is often found unworthy of the trust invested in him and incapable of properly serving his principal's interests.
2. Some women take liberty in dealing with the *walī*. They treat him as an intimate friend or relative, often sharing with him intimate secrets and going into *khulwah* (complete privacy) with him, which often leads to committing major sins.
3. Some women expect from the *walī* much more than what is within his capacity. His only duty is representing the woman and serving her best interest in regard to the marriage negotiations and contract. Once that is done, his duty ends and he stops being her *walī*. Some women, however, think that the *walī*'s position is permanent, and they contact him for every little or big problem in their life. This results in a relationship that is quite intimate and may lead to serious sinning as in (2) above.

MARRIAGE WITHOUT A WALĪ

From the above, we conclude that the presence of the *walī* (or his representative) is a required condition for the validity of the marriage contract. Therefore, a marriage that is held without the *walī*'s consent and approval is null and void.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَيُّمَا امْرَأَةٍ نَكَحْتَ بِغَيْرِ إِذْنِ وَلِيِّهَا، فَنِكَاحُهَا بَاطِلٌ، فَنِكَاحُهَا بَاطِلٌ، فَنِكَاحُهَا بَاطِلٌ. فَإِنْ دَخَلَ بِهَا فَلَهَا الْمَهْرُ بِمَا اسْتَحَلَّ مِنْ فَرْجِهَا. فَإِنْ أَشْتَبَرُوا، فَالسُّلْطَانُ وَلِيُّ مَنْ لَا وَلِيَ لَهُ.»

«Whichever woman marries without her *walī*'s permission, her marriage is void, her marriage is void, her marriage is void. If he (the husband) performs intercourse with her (despite the invalidity of their marriage), the *mahr* becomes her right because he had access to her private parts. And if they dispute (with the *walī* about this or other

matters), the ruler would then be the *walī* of the one who does not have a *walī*.»¹

A DIFFICULT WALĪ

A *walī* is required to represent his principal and serve her best interest. From the above *ḥadīth* of ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), we see that if the *walī* causes unnecessary harm to his principal or prevents her from doing things that Allāh has made permissible for her, she may protest and dispute that before the Islāmic authority. In that case, and if her allegations were found true, the Islāmic judge may command the *walī* to change his course of action, transfer his guardianship to another man, or make other decisions as he sees fit in her case.

Ma‘qil Bin Yasār (رضي الله عنه) reported that he married his sister to a man who subsequently divorced her. After the end of her *‘iddah*, he came seeking to remarry her. Ma‘qil said to him, “I married her to you, gave you furnishings, and was generous to you, but you divorced her! No, by Allāh, she will never go back to you!” But the man was reasonably good, and the woman wanted to go back to him. Allāh (ﷻ) then revealed:

«وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ» البقرة ٢٣٢

«And when you divorce women and they have fulfilled their term, do not prevent them from remarrying their husbands — if they agree between themselves on reasonable terms.»²

Ma‘qil then said to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), “Now I listen and obey, O Allāh’s Messenger!” So he let them remarry, and expiated his oath.³

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ul-Ghalīl* no. 1840).

² *Al-Baqarah* 2:232.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, ad-Dāraqūṭnī, and others.

THE WALI'S RESPONSIBILITY

The *walī*, whether natural or appointed, holds a major responsibility before Allāh toward his principal. He should represent her and look after her interest in the best possible way. He should make sure that the man who seeks marrying her is suitable for her. His criteria should be what pleases Allāh (as has been outlined in Chapter 2), and not what brings him better social status, wealth, or other worldly gains.

If it is demonstrated that the *walī* is not worthy of his responsibility, he loses his *walāyah* (position as being *walī*) according to the procedure outlined earlier.

The Witnesses

Another condition for the validity of a marriage contract is the presence of at least two trustworthy Muslim male witnesses.

ʿĀʾishah, ʿImrān Bin Ḥaṣayn, and Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

« لَا نِكَاحَ إِلَّا بِوَلِيِّ وَشَاهِدَيْنِ عَدْلٍ. »

«A marriage (contract) is not valid without a *walī* and two trustworthy witnesses.»¹

The witnesses should witness and hear all of the contract's details, including the permission given by the bride to the *walī*.

The Mahr (Dowry)

DEFINITION AND RULING

In Islām, the dowry is a mandatory marriage gift given by the husband to his wife at wedding. In Arabic, it is called *mahr* or *ṣadāq*.

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwāʾul-Ghālīl* no. 1839, 1858, 1860).

Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

﴿وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً﴾ النساء ٤

«And give the women (upon marriage) their dowry as a free gift.»¹

Commenting on this *āyah*, al-Qurṭubī (رحمته الله) said:

“This *āyah* indicates that the woman's *ṣadāq* is mandatory. There is a consensus on this (among the scholars), and there is no difference in its regard ...”²

And Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

﴿فَأَتَوْهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً﴾ النساء ٢٤

«And give them (the women that you marry) their compensation as an obligation.»³

And Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

﴿فَأَنكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ، وَأَتَوْهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ﴾ النساء ٢٥

«So marry them (slave girls) with their people's permission, and give them their compensation according to what is reasonable.»⁴

Even though the *mahr* is an obligation on the husband, there is no proof to make it a condition for the validity of the marriage contract. As we will see below, a marriage contract could possibly be executed without specifying a *mahr*. However, that should normally be avoided because it may lead to future complications and disputes.

¹ *An-Nisā'* 4:4.

² *Al-Jāmiʿu li-Aḥkām il-Qurʾān*.

³ *An-Nisā'* 4:24.

⁴ *An-Nisā'* 4:25.

WHO TAKES THE MAHR

The *mahr* is the sole right of the wife and no one may take any of it without her permission — not even her parents.

Some people may object to the above by citing the story of the old man who offered his daughter in marriage to Mūsā (ﷺ) and took her dowry in the form of labor work from Mūsā (see p. 48). However, as-San'ānī indicates, that was possibly permissible in the laws prior to Islām but was abrogated in Islām¹. Furthermore, Mūsā's service to the old man may have profited Mūsā's wife as well. Also, she may have agreed with her father to take something from him in exchange for Mūsā's service, or wanted to give up her *mahr* as a gift to her father.

The *mahr* is a compensation that the wife takes in return for making herself available to her husband. Thus, Allāh (ﷻ) gives her full right to it, even at the time of divorce — if her husband divorces her without any default on her part. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَأِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا؛ أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا؟ وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ، وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا؟» النساء ٢٠-٢١

«If you want to substitute one wife for another, and you have given one of them a *qinṭār*², do not take back any of it. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin? And how could you take it while you have intimately dealt with each other, and they (your wives) have taken from you a solemn covenant?»³

We will show below that the “*qinṭār*” in this *āyah* does not only refer to the *mahr*, but also to gifts and other items that the husband gives to the wife whom he then wants to divorce without a serious

1 *Subul us-Salām*.

2 *Qinṭār*: According to *Lisān ul-'Arab*, it is a large indefinite quantity of gold or silver. Most commonly, the Arabs used to mean by it four-thousand *dīnārs* (or gold coins).

3 *An-Nisā'* 4:20.

reason.

Therefore, it is up to the wife if she wants to keep all of her *mahr*, give some of it to her parents or other people, or even give some of it back to her husband¹. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً، فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَرِيئًا» النساء ٤

«And give the women (upon marriage) their dowry as a free gift. But if they willingly give up any of it to you, enjoy it with pleasure and satisfaction.»²

KINDS

The dowry can be money, jewelry, clothes, or other material things. It can also be a non-material gift, as we'll see below.

The amount of the dowry should be in accordance with the husband's financial ability and with what is reasonable for the bride in her social status. It is normally determined by agreement between the husband and the bride (or her *walī*).

Sahl Bin Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) reported that a woman once came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and offered herself (in marriage) to him. He (ﷺ) declined and indicated that he had no need for any (additional) wives. A man who was present with him said, “O Allāh's Messenger! Marry her to me.” The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, «هل عندك من شيء؟» «Do you have anything (to give her)?» He said, “No!” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «أعطيها ولو خاتماً من حديد.» «Give her at least an iron ring.» But he still could not afford it. He (ﷺ) asked him, «هل معك من القرآن شيء؟» «Have you memorized any portion of the Qur'ān?» He replied, “I memorized such-and-such *sūrah*s.” The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

«أَذْهَبَ فَقَدْ أُنكِحْتُهَا بِمَا مَعَكَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.»

1 Note that the way a woman dispenses of any of her property would still be subject to her husband's approval. This is discussed further in the third part of this series, “The Fragile Vessels”, by the Author.

2 *An-Nisā'* 4:4.

«Go (have her as wife). I marry her to you for the portion of the Qur'ān that you memorized.»¹

One may ask, "What benefit did she get from his memorization of the Qur'ān?" The answer is that he would then be expected to teach her some of what he had memorized, and to treat her kindly according to the upright principles learned from what he memorized. All of that would be of much more benefit to the bride than material gifts.

In addition to a cash sum of money that is usually specified as the *mahr*, some cultures require from the husband other financial commitments toward the bride, such as clothes, jewelry, and so on. In the Islāmic law, all of that counts as part of the *mahr*, and it is best to clearly name it in the marriage contract to avoid future disputes.

MODERATENESS IN DOWRIES

Islām does not set an upper limit for the dowry; but it is recommended to make it light and easy on the husband. A burdening *mahr* could be a bad omen of a miserable and non-compassionate marriage.

In many Muslim countries, the woman's parents request extremely high dowries. That has led many young men to forsake marriage or postpone it for a number of years, which has in turn led to the spread of *zinā* and other sins among the young. Thus, the parents should be considerate and should realize that demanding too much from the husband brings harm to their daughters and the whole Muslim community.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "I have married a woman from *al-Anṣār*."² The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, «على كم تزوجتها؟» «How much (*mahr*) did you give her?» He replied, "Four *ūqiyyahs*."³ Noting his limited financial condition, and that he needed help paying that *mahr*, the Prophet (ﷺ) said disapprovingly:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² This is the same man that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked if he had looked at his bride before marrying her (see p. 38).

³ *Ūqiyyah*: An old measure that corresponded to forty *dirhams*.

«على أربع أواق؟ كأنما تنحِتُونَ الفضةَ من عُرْضِ هذا الجبلِ.»

«Four *ūqiyyahs*? It is as though you scoop silver from the side of this mountain!»¹

Abū Ḥadrad al-Aslamī (رضي الله عنه) reported that he came to the Prophet (ﷺ) seeking help in paying a woman's *mahr*. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, «كم أمهرتها؟» «How much did you promise to give her?» He replied, "Two hundred *dirhams*." The Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

«لو كنتم تغرفونَ من بَطْحَانِ ما زدتم.»

«Had you been scooping (silver) from Baṭḥān², you would not have pledged more than that.»³

ʿUqbah Bin ʿĀmir (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خيرُ النكاحِ (أو الصَّدَاقِ) أيسرُهُ.»

«The best of marriages (or dowries) are the easiest.»⁴

A dowry that is light upon the husband is a sign of blessing for the bride. ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنْ مِنْ يُمْنِ الْمَرْأَةِ تَيْسِيرُ خِطْبَتِهَا، وَتَيْسِيرُ صَدَاقِهَا، وَتَيْسِيرُ رَحِمِهَا.»

«Verily, a sign of blessing for a woman is that her engagement, *ṣadāq*, and womb (i.e., giving birth), are all made easy.»⁵

¹ Recorded by Muslim, an-Nasā'ī, and others.

² Name of a valley in al-Madīnah.

³ Recorded by al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2173).

⁴ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3279, 3300, *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1842, & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1924).

⁵ Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2235 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1928).

UNSPECIFIED MAHRS

If the marriage contract is executed without specifying a *mahr*, that does not forfeit the wife's right to it.

'Uqbah Bin 'Āmir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to a man, «أترضى أن أزوجه فلانة؟» **<Do you agree that I marry so-and-so woman to you?>** He replied, "Yes." The Prophet (ﷺ) then said to the woman, «أترضين أن أزوجه فلانا؟» **<Do you agree that I marry you to so-and-so man?>** She replied, "Yes." So he married them to each other without naming a *mahr* for the bride or giving her anything. That man was of those who witnessed al-Hudaybiyah Covenant, and he got a share from the battle spoils of Khaybar. When he approached death, he said:

"Indeed, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) gave me so-and-so in marriage but I did not then give her anything. Be my witnesses that I now give her as *mahr* my share from Khaybar."

So she took that share and sold it for one hundred-thousand.¹

'Ulqumah (رضي الله عنه) reported that some people came to 'Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) and asked him about a case where one of them married a woman without naming a *mahr* for her and he died before consummating the marriage. 'Abdullāh said, "Since I departed from Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), I have not been asked a harder question. Go ask someone else." They kept trying to get an answer from him for one month, at the end of which they said, "Whom would we ask if we do not ask you, and you are one of the most esteemed of Muḥammad's (ﷺ) companions in this land, and we cannot find anyone else?" He said, "I will try to give you my best opinion in her regard. If it is right, that would be from Allāh alone Who has no partners. And if it is wrong, that would be from me and from Satan, and Allāh and His Messenger would be clear from it." Then he said:

"لها صداق نساءها، لا وكس ولا شطط، وعليها العدة، ولها الميراث."

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1924).

"She should be given a *mahr* similar to that of other women of her family (or social status), without increase or reduction, and she should accomplish the 'iddah (of four months and ten days), and she should be given her share of the inheritance."

Some individuals from the tribe of Ashja' were then present, and one of them, called Ma'qil Bin Sinān al-Ashja'i, stood and said:

"I testify that your judgment is similar to what Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) judged in regard to a woman of ours called Barū' Bint Wāshiq."

Since embracing Islām, 'Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd was never seen as pleased as he was when he heard this.¹

From the above reports we conclude that if, at wedding, a woman was not assigned a *mahr*, or if her *mahr* was too small compared to her husband's situation and the *mahrs* that are usually given to other women of her status, that does not forfeit her right to a fair *mahr*. She may then dispute that with the Islāmic authorities.

Therefore, extreme care should be taken by the woman's *walī* to make sure that his principal is given a fair *mahr* at the time of marriage. If she then chooses to give up part or all of it to the husband, she should do that voluntarily and knowingly.

DOWRIES OF THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

The *mahr* that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave to his wives varied from one to another. In the case of Ṣafiyyah (رضي الله عنها), her dowry was emancipation from slavery. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"أعتق النبي صفيّة، وجعل عتقها صداقها."

"The Prophet (ﷺ) freed Ṣafiyyah (and married her); and

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'i, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1939).

her freedom was her dowry.”¹

Umm Ḥabībah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she was married to ‘Ubayd Ullāh Bin Jahsh, and he died when they were at al-Ḥabashah (Abyssinia). So an-Najāshī (the Abyssinian king) gave her to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) in marriage. On behalf of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), an-Najāshī gave her four thousand (*dirhams*) as *mahr*, and he then sent her to him with Sharḥabīl Bin Ḥasanah.²

Thus, Umm Ḥabībah’s *mahr* was quite large. But it was not given to her by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. Rather, it was a gift from an-Najāshī on his behalf. In all other cases, the *mahr* that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) gave to his wives did not exceed five hundred *dirhams*.

Abū Salamah ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān reported that he asked ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), “How much was the *ṣadāq* that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) gave?” She replied:

“His *ṣadāq* to his wives was twelve and a half *ūqiyyahs*.”³

Abū al-‘Ajfā’ reported that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) once gave a *khuṭbah* in which he said:

“لا تُغالوا في صدقات النساء.”

“Do not be excessive in regard to the women’s dowries.”

He (رضي الله عنه) added:

“Had that been an indication of honor in this life or *taqwā* before Allāh, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have been most worthy of it among you. Yet, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) did not give as dowry to any of his wives, nor did any of his daughters receive more than

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* no. 1853).

3 Recorded by Muslim and others.

twelve *ūqiyyahs*.”¹

WEAK STORY: “A WOMAN IS RIGHT AND ‘UMAR IS WRONG”

It is important to warn against a weak story that is alleged to have taken place between ‘Umar and a woman, and even to note that some great scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمته الله), have quoted this story without realizing its weakness.

Once ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) gave a speech in which he admonished against excessiveness in dowries and said, “I will not allow any dowry larger than that of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) wives and daughters.” A woman protested saying:

“O Commander of the Believers! You just forbade the people from being excessive in dowries. Why would you prevent us from receiving something that Allāh (ﷻ) gave us?”

She then recited:

﴿وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا؛ أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَنًا وَإِنَّمَا مُبِينًا؟﴾ النساء ٢٠

«If you want to substitute one wife for another, and you have given one of them a *qinṭār*, do not take back any of it. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin?»²

Upon hearing this, ‘Umar said (two or three times), “All people have a better understanding than ‘Umar. Indeed, a woman is right and ‘Umar is wrong!” Then he went back to the *minbar* and addressed the people saying:

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1927).

2 *An-Nisā’* 4:20.

“Indeed, I had forbidden you from being excessive in the women’s dowries. But now I say: let every man do with his wealth as he pleases.”¹

After indicating the weakness of this report, al-Albānī (رحمته الله) said:

“Furthermore, the woman’s quotation of this *āyah* is out of place. The *āyah* refers to a woman who is divorced without reason. It means, ‘If you wish to substitute a new wife for a previous one that you dislike and have no patience to treat with kindness — even though she did not commit any obvious sin, and if you had previously given her a large amount of money — whether she had received it all or you had pledged it to her, making it a debt owed by you to her, do not take back any of it. Rather, you should leave it all to its rightful owner. You only wish to substitute her with another woman for the sake of your desire and enjoyment, and not for any *shar‘ī* reason that would have permitted your taking some of her money — such as her demanding separation, thereby hurting you by forcing you to divorce her. If she did not do anything like that, how can you take any of her money?’ ”²

This story is commonly cited by speakers and writers, trying thereby to prove a variety of points, some being absolutely false. Among the false conclusions are the following:

- ✗ It is permissible to demand excessive dowries.
- ✗ There is nothing wrong with women standing in a *masjid* and correcting the *imām* or other speakers.

1 This is a combined report recorded by Abū Ya‘lā, al-Bayhaqī, and ‘Abd ur-Razzāq. It is declared to be extremely weak by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1927 & *Raf’ ul-Malām* pp. 33-34).

2 Commentary on *Raf’ ul-Malām ‘an il-A’immat il-A’lām* pp. 34-35.

- ✗ Women may give public addresses to a mixed audience.
- ✗ No scholar of Islām deserves much respect, because even a common woman may easily expose his mistakes.
- ✗ Women should be allowed as members, or even heads, of religious councils, such as *shūrā* boards of Islāmic centers and organizations.

A POSSIBLE REASON FOR DESTRUCTION

Demanding from the husband *mahr* and gifts more than what he can afford could be a reason for destruction. If that becomes a standard practice among Muslims, it would inevitably lead some men to fall into theft, bribery, gambling, and other prohibited means in order to satisfy the greed of their wives and families. This would eventually destroy the whole society.

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رحمته الله) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن الدنيا حُلوة خَصِرَةٌ، وإن الله مستخلفكم فيها فينظرُ كيف تعملون، فاتقوا الدنيا واتقوا النساء، فإن أولَ فتنةِ بني إسرائيل كانت في النساءِ.»

‘Indeed, the *dunyā* (worldly life) is sweet and lush. And indeed, Allāh gives you custody over it to see how you will do. So, beware of the *dunyā*, and beware of women, because the first *fitnah* (trial) of the Children of Israel was through women.’¹

This *fitnah* is explained in another narration by Abū Sa‘īd (رحمته الله) that once the Prophet (ﷺ) gave a long speech about incidents from this life and the Hereafter, and among what he mentioned was the following:

«إن أولَ ما هلك بنو إسرائيل أن امرأةَ الفقير كانت تُكَلِّفُهُ مِنَ الثِّيَابِ أَوْ الصَّيِّغِ مَا تُكَلِّفُ أَمْرَأَةً الْغَنِيِّ.»

1 Recorded by Muslim and others.

«Indeed, what first destroyed the Children of Israel is that a poor man's wife would require from him as much clothing and jewelry as a rich man's wife.»¹

POSTPONED MAHR

It is recommended to give the bride her *mahr* immediately after execution of the marriage contract. As we saw in the above examples, the Prophet (ﷺ) only asked the husband for what he could offer at the time of marriage, and not what he could pledge for a future date.

Yet, it is a very common practice to divide the *mahr* into two portions, an advanced portion paid at the execution of the marriage contract, and a postponed portion to be paid when divorce or death takes place between the spouses.

Postponing the *mahr* is, in general, an innovated inconvenience that departs from the normal practice in the Sunnah. It defeats the very purpose of *mahr*, which is to be a gift given to the bride prior to having any intimacy with her. It also burdens the husband with a large amount of money that he must pledge as a postponed debt to an indefinite term.

GREAT PUNISHMENT FOR TAKING AWAY A WOMAN'S MAHR

A woman's *mahr* is a serious debt around a man's neck. Thus, it is a major sin to take it away from her without her consent. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أن أعظم الذنوب عند الله رجل تزوج امرأة، فلما قضى حاجته منها طلقها وذهب بمهرها. ورجل استعمل رجلاً فذهب بأجرته. وآخر يقتل دابة عبثاً.»

«Indeed, among the greatest sins before Allāh is that of a man who marries a woman, and after he fulfills his need with her, he divorces her and takes her *mahr*; and a man who hires another man but does

¹ Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah and Aḥmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 591).

not give him his pay; and a man who kills an animal without reason.»¹

This *ḥadīth* also points to a situation that is common in some of the Western countries. Some Muslim men coming from other countries marry Western Muslim women for a slight *mahr*, enjoy them for a period of time, and often obtain through them citizenship in their countries. Once they have fulfilled their need from them, they divorce them with a clear conscience! thus, they take advantage of their wives and, furthermore, underpay them their *mahrs*. They should fear Allāh and remember that if they get by with such actions in this life, they will not do the same before Allāh (ﷻ) on Judgment Day.

Conditions

PERMISSIBILITY OF SETTING CONDITIONS

At the time of enacting the marriage contract, the two parties may wish to set conditions whose violation would invalidate the contract. This is permissible and acceptable, as long as the conditions do not violate any Islāmic principles. The conditions are normally set by the wife's side, because the husband can terminate the marriage by uttering the divorce and needs no conditions to facilitate that for him.

'Uqbah Bin 'Āmir al-Juhanī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ أَحَقَّ الشُّرُوطِ أَنْ تُوفُوا بِهِ مَا اسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ بِهِ الْفُرُوجَ.»

«Indeed, the conditions that deserve to be fulfilled the most are those which allow you access to the women's private parts (by marriage and intercourse).»²

¹ Recorded by al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1567 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 999).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

POWER OF THE CONDITIONS

If the conditions are Islāmically acceptable, they must be fulfilled, and violating them would be sufficient cause for the wife to terminate the marriage if she so desires.

Al-Athram and 'Abd ur-Rahmān Bin Ghanam reported that a man married a woman and accepted her condition of wanting to stay in one house (i.e., town). Later on, he found it necessary to move to a different land, and his wife's family disputed that with 'Umar (ﷺ). 'Umar said, "Her condition must be honored." The man objected, "This is unfair to the men. So whenever a woman wishes to divorce her husband she would do so!" And 'Umar replied:

«المؤمنون على شروطهم. مقاطع الحقوق عند الشروط.»

"The believers are required to maintain their conditions; and the rights cease where there are conditions to fulfill." ¹

SUSPENDING A CONDITION

On the other hand, a condition may be waived by the wife, as an act of benevolence or forgiveness. Also, the Islāmic judge may suspend a condition if he finds that it violates an Islāmic principle.

It is interesting to note that, in another case, 'Umar (ﷺ) suspended the same condition that he passed in the above narration. That could be due to some difference that he saw in the overall situation of the families between the two cases, leading him to different judgments (and Allāh (ﷻ) knows best).

Sa'īd Bin 'Ubayd Bin as-Sabbāq reported that a man who married during the time of 'Umar allowed his wife a condition that he would not take her out (of her hometown). 'Umar (ﷺ) relieved him of this condition and said:

"A woman should be with her husband (i.e., wherever

¹ Recorded by Sa'īd Bin Mansūr, Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1893).

he moves)." ¹

Commenting on this, al-Bayhaqī (ﷺ) said:

"This report is closer to the Book and Sunnah, and agrees with others *ṣahābah*'s (ﷺ) opinion."

VOID CONDITIONS

As indicated above, if some of the conditions violate the Islāmic teachings, they are automatically considered null and void. 'Ā'ishah and Ibn 'Abbās (ﷺ) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«كل شرط ليس في كتاب الله فهو باطل، ولو كان مائة شرط.»

«Every condition not according to the Book of Allāh is void, even if it be a hundred conditions.» ²

As an example, Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لا تسأل المرأة طلاقَ أختها، لتستفرغَ صَفَتَها، ولتنكحَ، فإن لها ما قُدِّرَ لها.»

«Let not a woman require (as condition for marriage) the divorce of her sister (in Islām) in order to take what is in her plate (of food) and marry (her husband). Indeed, she will only get what has been decreed for her.» ³

Umm Mubashshir al-Anṣāriyyah (ﷺ) reported that after the death of her husband al-Barā' Bin Ma'rūr, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to her:

«إن زَيْدَ بْنَ حَارِثَةَ قَدْ مَاتَ أَهْلُهُ، وَلَنْ

¹ Recorded by al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1893).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd.

أَلُو أَنْ أُخْتَارَ لَهُ امْرَأَةٌ، فَقَدْ اخْتَرْتُكَ لَهُ.»

«Indeed, Zayd Bin Hārithah's wife has passed away, and I would like to find a wife for him; so I choose you for him.»

She was reluctant to accept and said, "I have promised my husband that I will not marry after him." The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, «إن هذا لا يصلح.» **«This (condition) is not right.»** Then he asked her, «أترغبين عنه؟» **«Do you dislike him?»** She said, "How can I dislike him when Allāh has placed him at such a close position to you? It is only the extreme concern that my late husband had for me. But, I will do whatever you say." So the Prophet (ﷺ) married her to Zayd and transferred her to live among his wives ¹. When a goat was milked and the milk brought to the Prophet (ﷺ), he would first give it Umm Mubashshir to drink, before giving it to any of his wives. One day, the Prophet (ﷺ) came into 'Ā'ishah's house while she was with her. He put his hand on 'Ā'ishah's knee and whispered something in her ear. She placed her hand over Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ), trying to push him away. Umm Mubashshir exclaimed, "How could you do this to Allāh's Messenger!" Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) laughed and said:

«دعيتها، فإنها تصنع هذا وأشد من هذا.»

«Leave her! She sometimes does this or even more than this.» ²

The Contract

THE KHUṬBAH

It is recommended for the person conducting the marriage ceremony

- ¹ That appears to be prior to the prohibition of adoption. Being the wife of his adopted son, the Prophet (ﷺ) treated Umm Mubashshir like a daughter-in-law.
- ² Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī and al-Bukhārī (in *at-Tārīkh*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 608).

to start with *khutbat ul-Hājah* that was reported by Ibn Mas'ūd and Jābir (رضي الله عنه). ¹

ĪJĀB AND QABŪL

Ījāb and *qabūl* (offering and acceptance) are the main and actual pillars of the contract. They signify the mutual agreement and acceptance between the two parties to join in this marriage bond. *Ījāb* and *qabūl* must be stated in clear, well defined words, in one and the same sitting, and in the presence of the witnesses.

The person conducting the ceremony may help the two parties say the following (or something to the same effect):

a. The wali:

«أُنكِحُكَ مَوْكَلَّتِي (فلانة)

على شريعة الله (ﷻ) وسنة رسوله (ﷺ)،

وعلى الصداق والشروط المسمأة بيننا.»

"I offer you the woman under my custody (so-and-so) according to Allāh's (ﷻ) Law and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah, and for the *mahr* and conditions to which we have agreed."

b. The bridegroom:

«قَبِلْتُ نِكَاحَ مَوْكَلَّتِكَ (فلانة)

على شريعة الله (ﷻ) وسنة رسوله (ﷺ)،

وعلى الصداق والشروط المسمأة بيننا.»

"I accept marrying the woman under your custody (so-and-so) according to Allāh's (ﷻ) Law and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah, and for the *mahr* and

¹ This *khutbah* is fully cited at the beginning of the Prelude of this book.

conditions to which we have agreed.”

The *ijāb* and *qabūl* must coincide in content. Any discrepancy between them would invalidate the contract. For example, if the *walī* says, “I give you so-and-so in marriage for a *mahr* of one-thousand,” and the bridegroom responds by saying, “I accept marrying so-and-so for a *mahr* of eight hundred,” the contract becomes immediately invalid.

WRITING THE CONTRACT

Documenting the marriage contract is not a requirement for the contract’s validity. However, it is important to document it for future reference and to preserve the rights of the husband and wife.

A sample marriage contract (or certificate) is included in Appendix A.

OUTCOME OF THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Once the marriage contract is executed, all rights and responsibilities for the two spouses, including the wife’s advanced *mahr*, become immediately due. The details of this are covered in the third book of this series.¹

¹ See “The Fragile Vessels” by the Author.

CHAPTER 5

CELEBRATING THE MARRIAGE

Publicizing the Marriage

A marriage contract marks the beginning of a new relationship between a man and woman who had until recently been strangers. Subsequently, the married couple may be seen together in public and, if the marriage was not publicized, some people might have ill thoughts about them. Because of this, it is important to make the marriage as public as possible — without going into extravagance and excessiveness.

‘Abdullāh Bin az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أعلنوا النِّكَاحَ.»

«Announce the marriage.»¹

And as-Sā’ib Bin Yazīd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أشيدوا النِّكَاحَ وأعلنوه.»

«Publicize the marriage and announce it.»²

Habbār Bin al-Aswad (رضي الله عنه) reported that he gave one of his daughters in marriage. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) heard the sound (of the wedding celebration) and inquired about it. He was told that Habbār married his daughter. So the Prophet (ﷺ) said approvingly:

«أشيدوا النِّكَاحَ، أشيدوا النِّكَاحَ. هذا النِّكَاحُ لا السَّفَاحَ.»

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 183).

² Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 1010, 1011 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1463).

«Publicize the marriage, publicize the marriage. This is a marriage, not fornication.»¹

Publicizing a marriage is commonly done in the wedding, which includes various acts of celebration, such as singing and rejoicing among the women, and a wedding banquet called the *walimah*. In this chapter, we discuss acts of marriage celebration that are permitted in Islām, and warn against impermissible acts. However, we postpone the discussion of the *walimah* to the next chapter.

Supplication

It is recommended to invoke blessings and prosperity for the married couple. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said to him at his wedding:

«بارك الله لك.»

«*Bārak Allāhu lak* — May Allāh bless (your wife and marriage) for you.»²

Buraydah Bin al-Ḥaṣīb (رضي الله عنه) reported that a group of *al-Anṣār* told ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه), “Why don’t you consider Fāṭimah (for marriage)?” Acting upon their advice, he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) who asked him, «ما حاجة ابن أبي طالب؟» «What does the son of Abū Ṭālib need?» He replied, “O Allāh’s Messenger! I came in regard to Fāṭimah the daughter of Allāh’s Messenger.” The Messenger (ﷺ) replied, «مرحباً وأهلاً.» «*Marḥaban wa-ahlan* — Welcome, and a family member,»³ and he said no more. ‘Alī went back to that group of *al-Anṣār* who were waiting for him. They asked him, “What do you

1 Recorded by Ibn Mandah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1463).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. A more complete version of this *ḥadīth* was cited in Chapter 2.

3 These two words are commonly used to welcome a guest. The first literary means, “Your presence is a cause of ease and vastness.” The second means, “You are like a member of the family.”

bring?” He said, “I do not know, except that he said to me, ‘*marḥaban wa-ahlan*.’” They said, “Just one of these two words would suffice you from Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ); he offered you the ‘family’ and ‘vastness’.” Later on, after the Prophet (ﷺ) married Fāṭimah to ‘Alī, he told him:

«إنه لا بُدُّ لِلْعُرْسِ (لِلْعُرْسِ) مِنْ وَكِيمَةٍ.»

«Indeed, a wedding (or a newlywed) must have a *walimah*.»

So one man said, “I will bring a ram,” and another man said, “I will bring some corn.” Then, on the wedding night, the Prophet (ﷺ) told ‘Alī, «لا تُحَدِّثْ شَيْئاً حَتَّى تَلْقَانِي.» «Do not do anything until you meet me.» So the Prophet (ﷺ) went over to ‘Alī, asked for some water, performed *wuḍū’* with it, poured it over ‘Alī, and said:

«اللهم بارك فيهما، وبارك لهما في بنائهما.»

«O Allāh, bless them and bless their wedding for them.»¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that when it was her wedding night, her mother took her to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) house, and she was welcomed by some women from *al-Anṣār* who congratulated her, saying:

«على الخير والبركة، وعلى خير طائر.»

“(May your marriage be) good and blessed, and may you have the best fortune.”²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) would say to a newlywed:

«بَارَكَ اللهُ لَكَ، وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكَ، وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا فِي خَيْرٍ.»

«*Bārak Allāhu lak, wa-bāraka ‘alayk, wa-jama’a*

1 Recorded by Ibn Sa’d, at-Ṭabarānī, and Ibn ‘Asākir. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* pp. 173-174).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

baynakumā fī khayr — May Allāh bless for you (your spouse), make you blessed, and join you two in prosperity.¹

‘Aqīl Bin Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) taught the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم) to say this *du‘ā* (for newlywed people):

«بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ، وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكُمْ.»

«*Bārak Allāhu lakum, wa-bāraka ‘alaykum* — May Allāh bless for you (your marriage) and make you blessed.»²

Singing and Beating the *Duff*

PROHIBITION OF MUSIC

As a general rule, music is prohibited in Islām. This rule is supported by authentic texts and by the consensus of the early ‘*ulamā*’ of Islām, including the Four *Imāms*.

Abū Mālik al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لَيَكُونَنَّ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ يَسْتَحِلُّونَ الْحِرَّ وَالْحَرِيرَ وَالْخَمْرَ وَالْمَعَازِفَ، وَلَيَنْزِلَنَّ أَقْوَامٌ إِلَى جَنْبِ عِلْمٍ، يَرُوحُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسَارِحَةٍ لَهُمْ، يَأْتِيهِمْ لِحَاجَةٍ فَيَقُولُونَ أَرْجِعْ إِلَيْنَا غَدًا، فَيُبَيِّتُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَضَعُ الْعِلْمَ، وَيَمَسُحُ آخِرِينَ قَرْدَةً وَخَنَازِيرَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.»

«Among my *Ummah* will be those who will indulge in *hir*³, silk⁴, alcohol, and musical instruments. Some

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 175).

2 Recorded by an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* pp. 175-177).

3 Adultery and fornication.

of those people will camp beside a mountain. A poor shepherd (tending their cattle) will come in the evening with their cattle, and will ask them for some (financial) help. They will say (to avoid helping him), “Come back tomorrow.” So Allāh will destroy most of them during the night, bringing the mountain down over them, and will transform the rest to apes and pigs until the Day of Resurrection.»¹

And Anas, ‘Imrān, and others (رضي الله عنهم) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لَيَكُونَنَّ فِي هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ خَسْفٌ وَقَذْفٌ وَمَسْخٌ، وَذَلِكَ إِذَا

شَرَبُوا الْخَمْرَ، وَاتَّخَذُوا الْقَيْنَاتِ، وَضَرَبُوا بِالْمَعَازِفِ.»

«Some people of this *Ummah* will be punished by earth-collapse, stoning, and metamorphosis. This will happen when they drink *khamr*, keep female singers, and play on musical instruments.»²

EXCLUSION OF THE *DUFF*

One instrument is excluded from the prohibition of musical instruments: the *duff*, which is similar to a tambourine, but without bells or rings. Its exclusion applies to three situations only:

a	‘ <i>Īd</i> celebrations.
b	Weddings — which is discussed below.
c	In fulfilling a vow. This derives from a unique incident during the Prophet’s (ﷺ) time that is irrelevant to our present discussion. ³

4 Wearing natural silk is prohibited for men.

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī (*Faṭḥ ul-Bārī* no. 5590), Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 5466 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 91).

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 5467 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2203).

3 We discuss (a) and (c) in our book, “Festivals & Celebrations in Islām”.

Furthermore, all reports in the Sunnah about the *duff* indicate that only women and children beat it. Thus, today's practice during weddings where men sing, play music, and dance is in discord with the Sunnah. A man should loathe to do such effeminate acts.

Therefore, we conclude:

Instrument that may be used:	The <i>duff</i>
Occasions for using it:	ʿĪds and weddings
People who may use it:	Women and children

BEATING THE DUFF AND SINGING IN WEDDINGS

Singing accompanied by the beating of *duff* is an approved practice of celebration FOR WOMEN during a wedding.

Abū Balj Yahyā Bin Salīm reported that he said to Muḥammad Bin Ḥaṭīb (رضي الله عنه), "In neither of my two weddings was there a sound (of singing)." Muḥammad then told him that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فَصَلِّ مَا بَيْنَ الْحَلَالِ وَالْحَرَامِ ضَرْبُ الدَّفِّ وَالصَّوْتُ فِي النِّكَاحِ.»

«The distinction between the lawful (i.e. marriage) and the prohibited (i.e., adultery) is the beating of *duff* and the sound (of singing) at a wedding.»¹

ʿĀʾishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she prepared a bride for her wedding to a man from the *Anṣār*. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يا عائشة، مَا كَانَ مَعَكُمْ لَهْوٌ، فَإِنَّ الْأَنْصَارَ يُعْجِبُهُمُ اللَّهْوُ؟»

«O ʿĀʾishah, did you not have some *lahw* (singing and dancing)? Indeed, the *Anṣār* like *lahw*.»²

1 Recorded by an-Nasāʾī, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 183, *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 4206, *Irwāʾ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1994).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and others.

WHAT TO SING

Singing should be done using simple and innocent wording, avoiding corrupt songs that call to sinning and disobedience. It is important to note that singing in those days was a mere recitation of poetry accompanied by periodic beating of the *duff*. It did not follow musical notes, nor did it contain lewd words or seductive body-actions.

In another report from ʿĀʾishah (رضي الله عنها), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فَهَلْ بَعَثْتُمْ مَعَهَا جَارِيَةً تَضْرِبُ بِالْدَّفِّ وَتُغَنِّي؟»

«Shouldn't you have sent with the bride a little girl to beat on the *duff* and sing?»

ʿĀʾishah (رضي الله عنها) asked, "What would she say?" He (ﷺ) replied:

«أَتَيْنَاكُمْ أَتَيْنَاكُمْ فَحَيُّونَا نُحَيِّكُمْ»

لَوْلَا الذَّهَبُ الْأَحْمَرُ سُرُّ مَا حَلَّتْ بِوَادِيكُمْ

لَوْلَا الْخِنْطَةُ السَّمْرُ مَا سَمِنَتْ عَذَارِيكُمْ

«Say, "We came to you, we came to you.

So greet us, and we will greet you.

Had it not been for the red gold,

Your desert-land would not have been inhabited.

And had it not been for the dark grain,

Your virgin girls would not have gained weight.»¹

DANCING

We saw above that the Prophet (ﷺ) permitted *lahw* for women during a wedding. *Lahw* includes beating the *duff* and singing, and may also include dancing. This dancing, however, is merely a slight and innocent swaying of the body to the beats of the *duff*, and is nothing like the lewd or seductive dancing that is often done nowadays in weddings.

1 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwāʾ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1995 & *Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 181).

Giving Gifts

Giving gifts is a good practice on all occasions. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«تَهَادُّوا تَحَابُّوا.»

«Exchange gifts: this will bring love among you.»¹

Gifts may be given to the married couple, keeping in mind the following considerations:

- ◇ They should not be given with extravagance or for show-off.
- ◇ They should not be viewed as a mandatory practice associated with the occasion — such as holding a bridal shower in which the attendees are required to bring gifts for the bride.
- ◇ The gifts should be permissible in Islām. They should not include statues, musical instruments, or other prohibited items.

With these guidelines, and with careful selection, wedding gifts can be very helpful to the newlywed in building their new home.

Anas Bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) married Zaynab (رضي الله عنها), Umm Sulaym² told Anas, “Let us give a present to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ).” Anas agreed, “Yes, do.” So she brought dates, butter, and dried yogurt, put them in a pot, and turned them into a smooth mixture (called *ḥaysah* or *ḥays*). When Anas took the pot to the Prophet (ﷺ), the Prophet (ﷺ) told him to set it down and then go and invite a certain number of men, as well as anyone whom he met along the way. Anas did as he was commanded, and by the time he was back he found the house overflowing with people. The Prophet (ﷺ) put his hands over the *ḥaysah*, read over it as much as

¹ Recorded by Abū Ya'lā, al-Bayhaqī and al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1601).

² Anas's mother.

Allāh willed, then invited the people to eat in successive groups of ten, telling them:

«أَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ، وَلِيَأْكُلَ كُلُّ رَجُلٍ مِمَّا يَلِيهِ.»

«Utter Allāh's name, and let each man eat from his side.»

Thus, everyone present ate from that food.¹

Avoiding Sinning During the Wedding Celebration

IMPORTANT WARNING

Sinning and disobedience to Allāh (ﷻ) is frequently practiced by Muslims during wedding celebrations. Many of them presume that the wedding is an occasion for abandoning some of the Islāmic principles.

In this section, we highlight a few such acts of disobedience, and call upon all Muslims to adamantly avoid them in their weddings, and to avoid weddings that have them.

We especially remind the newlywed and their families that the wedding marks the beginning of a new life for the couple. Therefore, all measures should be taken to embark on it in the best manner: acting in obedience to the Lord (ﷻ) and hoping for His forgiveness and blessing. They should all strive to avoid sinful acts that may deprive them from Allāh's blessing and make them liable to His severe punishment.

AVOIDING UN-ISLĀMIC APPEARANCE

In dressing up for a wedding, Muslims should take into consideration the following guidelines:

- ◇ They should avoid removing the hair that we are commanded to spare: they should avoid plucking their eyebrows, and men should avoid shaving or closely trimming their beard.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

- ◇ They should avoid copying styles of the non-Muslims and the corrupt — such as hairdos or clothing styles of actresses, singers, dancers, etc.
- ◇ Women may only wear perfume if they will be in the company of other women or with their own *mahrams*. Wearing it in the presence of non-*mahrams* constitutes a great sin. Abū Muṣā al-Ashʿarī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَيُّ امْرَأَةٍ اسْتَعْطَرَتْ فَمَرَّتْ عَلَى قَوْمٍ لِيَجِدُوا رِيحَهَا فَهِيَ زَانِيَةٌ.»

«Any woman who wears perfume and passes by men who would smell her perfume is an adulteress.»¹

- ◇ Women should avoid makeup. In addition to being an imitation of the nonbelievers, this harms the skin and demonstrates an alteration to Allāh's creation. The same is true about growing the nails and painting them with nail-polish.

It is permissible, however, to use natural *kuhl* (antimony) as eye liner. This was practiced by the *ṣaḥābah*, and ʿAlī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«عليكم بالإثمد، فإنه منبتة للشعر، مذهبة للقدى، مصفاة للبصر.»

«Use antimony: it helps the (eyelash) hair grow, removes eye-impurities, and clears the eyesight.»²

It is also permissible to use *ḥinnāʾ* (commonly, women apply it to the hands and feet). *Ḥinnāʾ* is a reddish-orange cosmetic produced from the leaves and stalks of the *ḥinnāʾ* plant. Salmā, a female servant of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported:

“Never did a wound afflict the Prophet (ﷺ) or a thorn

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 2701 and *al-Mishkāt* no. 1023).

2 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, Abū Nuʿaym, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 665).

prick him but that he put *ḥinnāʾ* on it.”¹

- ◇ Muslims should avoid tattooing and body-piercing. These are strongly prohibited in Islām. They are clearly from the dictates of Satan, and have only been popularized by the corrupt people in recent years.
- ◇ They should maintain a balance between elegance and moderation — never wearing clothing and adornment that reach the level of excessiveness or extravagance. They should keep in mind that the thousands that they may spend on a one-night's dress or pair of shoes may be desperately needed for saving the lives of starving Muslims in other parts of the world.
- ◇ They should avoid wearing clothing and adornment with the intention of boasting and showing-off.
- ◇ Their clothes should entirely cover the *ʿawrah* and conceal its shape. The extent of *ʿawrah* is provided in the following table:

Individual in Question	Extent of the <i>ʿAwrah</i>
Man with men or with women	From navel to knee
Woman with non- <i>mahrams</i> or with non-Muslim women	The whole body, except for the face and hands
Woman with <i>mahrams</i> or with Muslim women	The whole body, except for the head, neck, arms, and shins.

Examples of violations to covering the *ʿawrah*: men wearing shorts or tight pants; women exposing to non-*mahrams* their head or arms, or wearing tight, transparent, or flashy clothes; women exposing to other women their thighs, armpits, or part

1 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2059 and *al-Mishkāt* no. 4467).

of their bosom.

- ◇ They should avoid wearing clothing that is specific to the opposite sex — such as women wearing masculine styles, or men wearing natural silk, gold jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, neck-chains, etc.

AVOIDING UN-ISLĀMIC PRACTICES

Muslims should keep their wedding aloof of many of the un-Islāmic practices. In particular:

- ◇ They should avoid **mingling** between women and men who are not their *mahrams*, because it leads to various sinful acts, such as:
 - Touching, hugging, or shaking hands with each other.
 - Chatting, laughing, or flirting with each other.
 - Exchanging looks and stares with one another.
 - Admitting the bridegroom, sometimes accompanied by other men, into the women's section of the wedding in order to meet his bride and kiss her in front of a large number of women, many of them improperly dressed.
- ◇ They should avoid **spending extravagantly** or turning the wedding into an arena for show-off — thereby wasting money on things that are of no benefit for the Muslims, such as:
 - Holding the wedding in an expensive hotel or ballroom where lavish foods are served and many violations to Islām are committed.
 - Distributing to the attendees expensive artifacts filled with sweets, or throwing silver or golden coins for the “lucky” people to catch.
 - The bride wearing a very expensive wedding gown that usually exposes much of her *‘awrah*.
- ◇ They should avoid other sinful acts that are characteristic of **un-Islāmic wedding celebration**, such as:

- Having un-Islāmically dressed waitresses provide the service.
- Playing music, often combined with suggestive singing and lewd dancing.
- Offering alcoholic beverages. Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا

يَقْعُدُ عَلَى مَائِدَةٍ يُدَارُ عَلَيْهَا الْخَمْرُ.»

«Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day may not sit at a table on which *khamr* is circulated.»¹

- The newlywed couple wearing wedding rings to indicate their new “married” status — a practice that has absolutely no basis in Islām.
- ◇ They should avoid **undermining Islāmic rites and rituals**, such as:
 - Missing a prayer or refraining from praying it in *jamā‘ah*.
 - Holding the wedding until a late hour, causing attendees to miss the *fajr* prayer.

AVOIDING TAKING PICTURES

A Muslim should not take a picture or help in taking it unless it fulfills a need that cannot be fulfilled otherwise.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once saw in her house a curtain with pictures, so his face showed anger and he said:

«إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَصْنَعُونَ هَذِهِ الصُّورَ يُعَذَّبُونَ يَوْمَ

الْقِيَامَةِ، وَيُقَالُ لَهُمْ أَحْيُوا مَا خَلَقْتُمْ.»

«Indeed, those who make these pictures will be tortured on the Day of Resurrection and will be told,

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ul-Ghālīl* no. 1949).

“Give life to what you have created.”¹

So she removed the curtain, cut it, and made pillows with it.¹
Ibn Mas‘ūd reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَذَاباً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الْمُصَوِّرُونَ.»

«Indeed, the people who will receive the most severe punishment on the Day of Resurrection are those who make pictures.»²

Abū Ṭalḥah, ‘Alī, and others (رضي الله عنهم) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا تَدْخُلُ بَيْتاً فِيهِ كَلْبٌ أَوْ صُورَةٌ.»

«Indeed, the angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture.»³

These *ḥadīths* are applicable to all forms of pictures of living beings that have souls, even if they are fictitious — whether the pictures are two or three-dimensional, and whether they are paintings or photographs.

A common modern practice during wedding celebrations is taking a large number of pictures and video clips of the newlywed couple and their relatives and friends. Those pictures usually show various acts of disobedience to Allāh (ﷻ), such as women exposing their heads and other parts of their bodies and making various poses with men who are not their *mahrāms*. Thus, in addition to taking pictures for which there is no necessity or need, the pictures reflect many instances of sinning and disobedience. They “freeze” the people’s sinning for them and others to see and remember for many years to come — which adds to their balance of evil deeds on Judgment Day.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

Definition and Ruling

The *walīmah* (or wedding feast) is a meal offered by the husband to the friends and family after the consummation of marriage.

The *walīmah* is *wājib* (obligatory) upon the husband. Buraydah Bin al-Ḥaṣīb (رضي الله عنه) reported that when ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) married Fāṭimah, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِلْعُرْسِ (لِلْعُرُوسِ) مِنْ وَلِيمَةٍ.»

«Indeed, a wedding (or a bridegroom) must have a *walīmah*.»

So Sa’d said, “I will bring a ram.” And another man said, “I will bring some corn.”¹

When ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin ‘Awf (رضي الله عنه) migrated to al-Madīnah, the Prophet (ﷺ) made him brother² with Sa’d Bin ar-Rabi’ al-Anṣārī. Sa’d (رضي الله عنه) told ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān, “My brother! I am the wealthiest man of al-Madīnah, so I will divide my wealth in half between us; and I have two wives while you, my brother, have none; so see which of them you prefer: I will divorce her for you to marry after she concludes her *‘iddah*.” ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān replied, “By Allāh no! May Allāh bless your family and wealth for you. Just show me the way to the market.” Thus, he went to the market, traded, and soon made profit and brought home some *aqiṭ* (dried yogurt) and butter.

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad and an-Nasā’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 2419 & *Ādāb uz-Zifāf* pp. 144-145).

² In the early years of *Hijrah*, the Prophet (ﷺ) paired the Muslims as brothers, with one of the pair from the *Muhājirīn* and one from the *Anṣār*. The *Anṣār*, being the original residents of al-Madīnah, were ready and willing to accommodate their brothers from Makkah who had left everything behind them when they made *Hijrah*.

A while after that, the Prophet (ﷺ) saw 'Abd ur-Raḥmān wearing yellowish garments (which were commonly worn by the newlywed). He (ﷺ) asked him, «مَهْنِمٌ؟» <What has happened?> He replied, "I have married a woman from the *Anṣār*." He (ﷺ) asked him, «مَا سَقَتَ إِلَيْهَا.» <What did you give her (as *mahr*)?> He replied, "A date stone's weight of gold." The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

«فَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ. أَوْلِمَ، وَلَوْ بِشَاةٍ.»

<May Allāh bless it for you. Offer a *walimah* — even if it be with only one goat.>

'Abd ur-Raḥmān later said, "It then came to that, should I raise a stone, I would expect to find gold or silver underneath it (by virtue of the Prophet's (ﷺ) supplication)." And Anas (رضي الله عنه), the narrator of this *ḥadīth*, concluded, "After 'Abd ur-Raḥmān passed away, each one of his wives got a share of one-hundred-thousand *dīnārs*." ¹

Regulations and Recommendations

The following additional regulations apply to the *walimah*:

THE WALIMAH'S TIME

Following the Prophet's (ﷺ) practice, the *walimah* should normally be held on the wedding night or within the first three days following it.

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once consummated his marriage with one of his wives, so he sent me and I invited some men for food." ²

Anas (رضي الله عنه) also reported:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī and al-Bayhaqī.

"When the Prophet (ﷺ) married Ṣafiyyah, her freedom was her *mahr*. And he held the *walimah* for three days." ¹

In a similar report, Anas (رضي الله عنه) said:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) camped between Khaybar and al-Madīnah for three nights, consummating his marriage with Ṣafiyyah. I invited the Muslims to his *walimah*, which had no bread or meat. Leather sheets were spread on the ground, dates and *aqiṭ* (dried yogurt) and butter were tossed over them, and the people ate their fill." ²

And Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

"When Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) had his wedding with Zaynab, he offered a *walimah* in which the Muslims ate their fill of bread and meat. Then (in the morning) he went out to the Mothers of the Believers, gave them *salām*, and supplicated for them. In return, they gave him *salām* and supplicated for him. This was his practice on the morning following his wedding." ³

TYPES OF FOOD

We conclude from the above reports about 'Alī and 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin 'Awf that it is recommended to include meat in a *walimah*, with a minimum of one sheep or goat — if that be affordable.

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«مَا رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أُوْلِمَ عَلَى امْرَأَةٍ مِنْ نِسَائِهِ أَكْثَرَ أَوْ أَفْضَلَ مِمَّا أَوْلِمَ عَلَى زَيْنَبَ، فَإِنَّهُ ذَبَحَ شَاةً، وَأَطْعَمَهُمْ خُبْزاً وَلَحْماً حَتَّى تَرَكُوهُ.»

¹ Recorded by Abū Ya'la. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 146).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ Recorded by an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Sa'd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* pp. 137-138).

“I never saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) offer as much food in any of his wives’s *walimahs* as he did in Zaynab’s. He slaughtered a goat and fed the people bread and meat until they were full.”¹

However, meat is not a condition for a *walimah*. We saw above (and will see again below) that the Prophet’s (ﷺ) *walimah* when he married Ṣafīyyah did not include any meat.

HELPING WITH THE COST

The *walimah* is the husband’s obligation. However, it is permissible for other Muslims to help him in its cost or preparation. We have seen above that a number of Muslims helped ‘Alī in preparing his *walimah*.

Similarly, giving additional details of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) marriage with Ṣafīyyah (رضي الله عنها), Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that during the trip back to al-Madīnah, Umm Sulaym prepared Ṣafīyyah for the Prophet (ﷺ) and presented her to him during the night. On the morning following his consummation of the marriage, he (ﷺ) said:

«من كان عنده فضل زاد فليجيء به»

«Anyone who has extra provision, bring it to us.»

Thus, people brought *aqit*, dates, and butter, and made *ḥays* (name of a dish) with them, and everyone ate of that *ḥays* and drank from rain water that gathered in basins next to them.²

WHOM TO INVITE

A newlywed should invite to the *walimah* his Muslim relatives, friends, and acquaintances, especially the righteous among them. Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا تُصَاحِبْ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنًا وَلَا يَأْكُلْ طَعَامَكَ إِلَّا تَقِي.»

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

«Do not accompany except a believer, and do not feed your food except to a pious person.»

Sinful individuals and non-Muslims should largely be excluded from the invitation — unless there is an important benefit in inviting them, such as exposing them to *da‘wah*, provided that their presence would not influence the attendees in a negative way.

In inviting to a *walimah*, there should not be a distinction between the poor and rich. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«شَرُّ الطَّعَامِ طَعَامُ الْوَلِيمَةِ، يُدْعَى لَهَا الْأَغْنِيَاءُ، وَيُمْنَعُهَا

الْمَسَاكِينُ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِبِ الدَّعْوَةَ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ.»

«The worst food is that of a *walimah* to which the rich are invited but the poor are not. And he who rejects the invitation (to a *walimah*) has surely disobeyed Allāh and His Messenger.»¹

In another report from Abū Hurayrah, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«شَرُّ الطَّعَامِ طَعَامُ الْوَلِيمَةِ يُمْنَعُهَا مَنْ يَأْتِيهَا، وَيُدْعَى إِلَيْهَا

مَنْ يَأْبَاهَا. وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِبِ الدَّعْوَةَ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ.»

«The worst of food is that of a *walimah* to which those who come (because of hunger) are turned away, and those who are invited do not wish to attend (because they have no need for food). And he who does not answer the invitation (to a *walimah*) has surely disobeyed Allāh and His Messenger.»²

¹ Recorded by Muslim and others from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Abbās, and Ibn ‘Umar. Some of the reports in al-Bukhārī and Muslim indicate that this is *mawqūf*, being the saying of Abū Hurayrah. But other authentic reports prove that it is stated by the Prophet (ﷺ) (see *Irwā’ul-Ghālīl* no. 1947 and *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1085).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. See the previous footnote.

Manners for the Host

There are certain etiquettes that should be implemented by a host when he invites people to a wedding *walimah* or any other meal. Some of them have been included in the previous section. In what follows we include some additional important ones.

SINCERITY

One should realize and remember that feeding is an act of worship. Thus it should be performed with sincerity — only seeking Allāh's reward for it.

ʿAbdullāh Bin ʿAmr Bin al-ʿĀṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man asked Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), "Which acts are superior in Islām?" He (ﷺ) replied:

«تَطْعُمُ الطَّعَامَ، وَتَقْرَأُ السَّلَامَ عَلَى مَنْ عَرَفْتَ وَمَنْ لَمْ تَعْرِفْ.»

«They are: feeding the food, and greeting with *salām* those whom you know and whom you do not.»¹

Ṣuhayb (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ أَطْعَمَ الطَّعَامَ وَرَدَّ السَّلَامَ.»

«The best among you are those who feed the food (to others) and respond to the *salām*.»²

AVOIDING EXTRAVAGANCE AND SHOW-OFF

Some people like to impress others about their wealth and status by holding extravagant banquets and receptions in expensive hotels, and by offering costly food and services that are often beyond their means and are extremely straining to their resources for a long time to follow.

This is prohibited in Islām. It reflects an imitation of Satan as

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

² Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 3318).

Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَا تُبْذِرْ تَبْذِيرًا ۚ إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ،
وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ۝» الإسراء ٢٦-٢٧

«Do not waste your wealth senselessly. Those who spend wastefully are the brothers of the devils; and the Devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord.»¹

And Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا، إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ۝» الأعراف ٣١

«Eat and drink, but do not be excessive; verily, He does not like the extravagant.»²

Al-Mughīrah Bin Shuʿbah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَرِهَ لَكُمْ ثَلَاثًا، قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ، وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ.»

«Allāh verily hates three qualities for you: gossiping, wasting money, and begging.»³

Jundub Bin ʿAbdillāh and Ibn ʿAbbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ سَمِعَ سَمَعَ اللَّهِ بِهِ، وَمَنْ رَأَى رَأَى اللَّهَ بِهِ.»

«Whoever does things for others to hear, Allāh will make people hear about his sins (on Judgment Day). And whoever does things for others to see, Allāh will show his sins to others (on Judgment Day).»⁴

Once two men visited Salmān. Salmān brought before them bread

¹ *Al-Isrāʾ* 17:26-27.

² *Al-Aʿrāf* 7:31.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

⁴ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

and salt, which was all that he had at home, and said:

“Had Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) not prohibited us from being excessive in what we offer to our guests, we would have burdened ourselves for your sake.”¹

AVOIDING IMPERMISSIBLE UTENSILS

One form of extravagance that some people practice in banquets and *walimahs* is serving food in gold or silver plates or using silverware made of or plated with gold or silver.

Huthayfah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا تلبسوا الحريرَ والديباجَ، ولا تشربوا في آنية الذهب والفضة، فهي لهم في الدنيا، وهي لكم في الآخرة.»

«Do not wear silk or *dībāj* (an expensive garment with silk lining and borders), nor sit on it; and do not eat or drink in silver or gold utensils; such things are for them (the disbelievers) in the worldly life, and will be for us in the Hereafter.»²

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن الذي يأكلُ أو يشربُ في آنية الفضة والذهب، فإنما يجرُّهُ في بطنِهِ ناراً من جهنم.»

«Indeed, he who eats or drinks in gold or silver utensils only echoes in his stomach some of the Hell-fire.»³

Many scholars permit using silver-plated silverware — provided

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ul-Ghalīl* no. 1957).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

that the silver layer is so thin that it is negligible compared to the overall substance. However, even then, using that kind of silverware is a source of *shubhah* (doubt), and is better to be avoided.

INVITING MANY PEOPLE

Within what is reasonable, the newlywed should try to bring to the *walimah* as many people as is possible. Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أحبُّ الطعامِ إلى الله ما كُثرت عليه الأيدي.»

«The most beloved food to Allāh is that on which many hands gather.»¹

HONORING THE GUESTS

The guest has a right upon his host: he should be well treated and honored. Honoring the guest is a sign of true belief. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليكرم ضيفه، ومن كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليصل رحمه، ومن كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر فليقل خيراً أو ليصمت.»

«He who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should honor his guest; he who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should be kind to his kin; and he who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should either say a good thing or remain silent.»²

1 Recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 171 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 895).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

PROPHETIC MANNERS IN HONORING THE GUESTS

One can learn a great deal about the fine manners of honoring the guests from a few *āyāt* describing Ibrāhīm's (عليه السلام) treatment of his guests. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ؟ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا: «سَلَامًا». قَالَ: «سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ». فَرَاغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ: «أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ؟» ﴿الذاريات ٢٤-٢٧﴾

«Has the story reached you of the honored guests of Ibrāhīm? That was when they entered upon him and said, "Peace (be upon you)!" He answered, "(And upon you be) peace, unfamiliar folks!" Then he turned quietly to his household, brought forth a fat (roasted) calf, and placed it before them. He said, "Will you not eat?"»¹

Ibn ul-Qayyim (رحمته الله) provides a very inspiring coverage of the various lessons that one can learn from these *āyāt*. In what follows, we summarize his discussion in regard to honoring the guests².

1. Ibrāhīm went quietly and secretly (*rāgha*) to prepare the food. This indicates his hastening to honor and serve his guests in a secret manner in order not to embarrass them. This is to be contrasted with one who would purchase and prepare the food slowly and lazily, all in the presence of his guests. Such action would surely embarrass and disturb them.
2. For preparing the food, Ibrāhīm turned to no place other than his own household. This indicates that he had all what is usually needed to honor and serve the guests. He had no need of seeking anything from the neighbors or elsewhere.

¹ *Ath-Thāriyāt* 51:24-27.

² The full text of Ibn ul-Qayyim is presented in the Author's translation of *ar-Risālat ut-Tabūkiyyah*.

3. Ibrāhīm brought the calf by himself. He served his guests personally rather than sending someone else to serve them.
4. Ibrāhīm brought before them a complete animal, and not just a portion of it. This would allow them to select any part of it that they favor.
5. Ibrāhīm brought before them a fat animal, and not a skinny one. Furthermore, being a young calf and not a full grown cow indicates that it was an expensive animal that should please the guests. His generosity and hospitality made him slaughter it despite its value.
6. Ibrāhīm brought the food and placed it in front of the guests rather than putting it in another room and having them move to reach it.
7. Rather than saying, "Go ahead and eat!", Ibrāhīm invited the guests to eat with kind words, "Will you not eat?" — thereby giving them the choice of eating or not.

Manners for the Guests

There are also certain *ādāb* that should be exhibited by a guest who is invited to a *walimah* or other meals. In what follows, we present some of the most important *ādāb*.

ANSWERING THE INVITATION IS A RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION

It is an obligation on every person who is invited to a *walimah* to attend — unless he has a legitimate Islāmic excuse.

Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا دُعِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى الْوَلِيمَةِ فَلْيَأْتِهَا، عَرَسًا أَوْ نَحْوَهُ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِبِ الدَّعْوَةَ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ.»

«When one of you is invited to a *walimah*, he should attend it — if it is a wedding or something like it.

And whoever does not answer the invitation, he has surely disobeyed Allāh and His Messenger.»¹

Ibn Hajar concluded from this *ḥadīth* that answering the invitation is *wājib* because the one who does not do it is disobedient.²

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«فُكُوا الْعَانِيَّ، وَأَجِيبُوا الدَّاعِيَ، وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ.»

«Set the (Muslim) captives free (by paying their ransom to the enemies), respond to the caller (to a *walimah* and its likes), and visit the sick.»³

This carries a command from the Prophet (ﷺ), which again establishes that answering the invitation is a *wājib*.

With this understanding, one should answer the invitation with *īmān* (believing in its religious value) and *iḥtisāb* (seeking Allāh's reward for his attendance). If this is sincerely fulfilled, attending a *walimah* becomes a rewardable act of worship.

LEGITIMATE EXCUSES

A legitimate excuse that justifies not attending a *walimah* is any reason that would make attending it beyond a person's reasonable ability.

Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا» البقرة ٢٨٦

«Allāh does not burden a person beyond his capacity.»⁴

And He says:

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. The part specifying the wedding is recorded by Abū Ya'la and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 154).

2 *Fath ul-Bārī*.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī.

4 *Al-Baqarah* 2:286.

«يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ» البقرة ١٨٥

«Allāh intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship.»¹

And He says:

«فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ» التغابن ١٦

«So have *taqwā* of Allāh as much as you are able.»²

Thus, the following could count as legitimate excuses:

1. Being invited to two *walimahs* in two different places at the same time.
2. Having to undertake an expensive trip to attend the *walimah*.
3. Having at the same time an important appointment that missing it would result in a serious harm in wealth, health, or well-being. Ex., a school examination, a business deal, etc.

However, even in such cases where a person feels that he is justified in turning down an invitation to a *walimah*, he should contact the host and present his excuse ahead of time.

AVOIDING INVITATIONS THAT INVOLVE DISOBEDIENCE

One should decline the invitation to a *walimah* that includes acts of disobedience to Allāh, such as drinking alcohol, music, mixing between men and women, and so on.

'Ali Bin Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) reported that he prepared some food and invited the Prophet (ﷺ). When the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived, he saw some pictures and turned to leave. 'Alī said, "O Allāh's Messenger, what made you turn back — may my mother and father be your ransom?" He (ﷺ) replied:

1 *Al-Baqarah* 2:185.

2 *At-Taghābun* 64:16.

«إِنَّ فِي الْبَيْتِ سِتْرًا فِيهِ تَصَاوِيرُ، وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا تَدْخُلُ بَيْتًا فِيهِ تَصَاوِيرُ.»

«Indeed, there is a curtain in the house on which there are pictures; and the angels do not enter any house in which there are pictures.»¹

Aslam, the servant of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), reported that when 'Umar went to ash-Shām (Palestine and the surrounding lands), one of the Christian leaders prepared some food (in a church) and said to 'Umar, "Indeed, I would like you and your companions to come and honor me." 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

«إِنَّا لَا نَدْخُلُ كَنَائِسَكُمْ مِنْ أَجْلِ الصُّورِ الَّتِي فِيهَا.»

"Indeed, we do not enter your churches because of all of the images that are in them."²

Abū Mas'ūd 'Uqbah Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man once prepared food for him and invited him. He asked the man, "Are there pictures in the house?" The man replied, "Yes." Abū Mas'ūd then refused to enter until the image was smashed, then he entered.³

Al-Awzā'ī (رضي الله عنه) said:

"We do not attend a *walimah* in which there are drums or lutes."⁴

EATING FROM THE FOOD

Even though it is obligatory to respond to the invitation, it is not obligatory to eat from the food. Depending on his situation, the guest

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah and Abū Ya'lā. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 161).

² Recorded by al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* pp. 164-165).

³ Recorded by al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 165).

⁴ Recorded by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ḥarbī (in *al-Fawā'id ul-Muntaqāt*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 166).

may wish to eat or abstain from eating. In the second case, he should present his excuse for not eating in order to avoid offending the host.

Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا دُعِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ فَلْيُجِبْ، فَإِنْ شَاءَ طَعِمَ، وَإِنْ شَاءَ تَرَكَ.»

«When one of you is invited to food, he should respond to the invitation. If he then wishes, he may eat; and if he wishes, he may refrain from eating.»¹

However, it is better to eat, even a little bit, as is mentioned in the next section.

WHAT FASTING PEOPLE SHOULD DO

A fasting person may remain fasting in a *walimah*. Instead of eating, he should then supplicate for the host.

Abū Hurayrah and Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا دُعِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ فَلْيُجِبْ، فَإِنْ كَانَ مُفْطِرًا

فَلْيَطْعَمْ، وَإِنْ كَانَ صَائِمًا فَلْيُصَلِّ (فَلْيَدْعُ بِالْبَرَكَةِ).»

«When one of you is invited to food, he should answer the invitation. If he is not fasting, he should eat; and if he happens to be fasting, let him supplicate (asking blessings for the host).»²

Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَجِيبُوا هَذِهِ الدَّعْوَةَ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ لَهَا.»

«Answer this invitation (to a *walimah*) when you are invited.»

¹ Recorded by Muslim and others.

² Recorded by Muslim and others. The last part (about the blessings) is only reported by Ibn Mas'ūd, recorded by at-Ṭabarānī and Ibn us-Sunnī, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1953).

And Ibn 'Umar used to attend when he was invited to a *walimah*, and would sometimes attend while fasting.¹

However, if one is fasting a voluntary fasting, it is recommended for him to break his fast, especially if he expects his eating to bring joy to the host's heart.

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that he once prepared some food for Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). The Messenger (ﷺ) came with some of his companions. When the food was brought, one man stayed away saying, "I am fasting." Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then said:

«دَعَاكُمْ أَخُوكُمْ وَتَكَلَّفَ لَكُمْ! أَفْطِرْ وَصُمْ مَكَانَهُ يَوْمًا إِنْ شِئْتَ.»

«Your brother has invited you and toiled for your sake! Break your fast and fast another day instead — if you wish.»²

(This *ḥadīth* also indicates that it is not obligatory to make-up a voluntary fasting.)

SEEKING PERMISSION TO ENTER

When one goes to a *walimah* or its like, the host would usually be expecting him and there is not much necessity for seeking permission to enter — especially if it is held in a public place.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«رَسُولُ الرَّجُلِ إِلَى الرَّجُلِ إِذْنُهُ.»

«A messenger from one man to another (inviting him) gives him the permission (to attend).»³

In another report, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ)

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī, aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Awsaṭ*), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1952 & *Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 159).

3 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Hibbān, and al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1955).

said:

«إِذَا دُعِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ فَجَاءَ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ، فَذَلِكَ إِذْنٌ لَهُ.»

«When one of you is invited to food and he comes with the messenger, that constitutes a permission for him.»¹

Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said:

«إِذَا دُعِيتَ فَقَدْ أُذِنَ لَكَ.»

«When you are invited, you are (automatically) given the permission (to attend).»²

However, if the food is served in a private home, one must seek permission to enter. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا، ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ النور

«O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted those in them; that is better for you — that you may remember.»³

Taking permission is important for a number of reasons, among which are the following:

1. The host should prepare himself for receiving the guests and make sure that their eyes would not fall on any of the women of the house who may be improperly dressed.

Sahl Bin Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1955).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1956).

3 *An-Nūr* 24:27.

«إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الاستئذانُ من أجل البصر.»

«Indeed, seeking permission to enter has only been ordained for the sake of the eye sight.»¹

2. The host should be given the chance to ascertain that those who seek admission have all been invited. More about this will be discussed in the next sub-section.

WHEN GOING WITHOUT INVITATION

We saw from the above *ḥadīths* in the previous sub-section that an invitation constitutes permission to attend. An uninvited person, therefore, has no guaranteed permission to be admitted — the host has the full right of either receiving him or asking him to leave.

Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī al-Badrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man from *al-Anṣār*, Abū Shu'ayb, had a slave who was a butcher. One day, while the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting with four of his companions, Abū Shu'ayb visited him and noticed signs of hunger on his face. He rushed to his slave and ordered, "Prepare a meal sufficient for five persons so that I may invite the Prophet (ﷺ) with four other men." He then went and invited the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other four men. On their way to his house, a sixth man followed them. When they reached his door, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إن هذا تبعنا، فإن شئت أن تأذن، وإن شئت رجع.»

«Indeed, this man has followed us. If you wish you may admit him, and if you wish you may refuse him.»

Abū Shu'ayb (رضي الله عنه) said, "No, I will admit him, O Allāh's Messenger."²

This *ḥadīth* indicates that the host may choose to accept or reject any uninvited guests, since he knows better how capable he is of

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

entertaining his guests.

Unfortunately, we witness many cases where invited guests bring with them some uninvited individuals, thereby embarrassing the host and making it difficult for him to refuse them. They may even take personal offense if the host refused to admit their invitees. This is a clear violation of the Sunnah and deviation from proper guest-etiquettes.

GREETING WITH SALĀM, AND SHAKING HANDS

When a Muslim meets his Muslim brothers, he should greet them with *salām*. Similarly, when one enters into someone's house for food or some other reason, he should greet the people who are present with *salām*. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً

مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً» النور ٦١

«When you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allāh, blessed and good.»¹

The host and other people who are present should respond with a greeting as good or better. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا، إِنَّ اللَّهَ

كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا» النساء ٨٦

«When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) respond to it equally. Indeed, Allāh is ever a Careful Accountant over all things.»²

The reader is further referred to the *ḥadīths* of Ibn 'Amr and Suhayb that were cited early in this chapter (p. 106).

¹ *An-Nūr* 24:61.

² *An-Nisā'* 4:86.

Some people greet each other with non-Islāmic greetings, such as, "Good evening," "Hi," and so on. This should be avoided, because Allāh gave us a better greeting: the *salām*. It carries a supplication of peace, and it is the greeting of the angels and the people of *Jannah*.¹

Some people are also of the non-Islāmic habit of hugging and kissing each other whenever they meet. Hugging should only be reserved to meeting a person after a long absence, such as one who just came back from travel. In other situations, the Muslims should greet each other with *salām* and shake each others' hands.

Anas Bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man asked the Prophet (ﷺ), "O Messenger of Allāh! When one of us meets his (Muslim) brother, should he bow his head to him?" He (ﷺ) replied, «. لا» «No!» The man asked, "Should he embrace and kiss him?" He (ﷺ) replied, «. لا» «No!» The man then asked, "Should he shake his hand?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, «نعم» «Yes!»²

There is indeed a great reward for shaking hands with a Muslim brother (or a woman with her Muslim sister). Al-Barā' Bin 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما من مسلمين يلتقيان فيتصافحان إلا غُفِرَ لهما قبل أن يتفرقا.»

«Never would two Muslims meet and shake hands but they are forgiven even before they separate.»³

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا انتهَى أحدكم إلى المجلس فليسلم، فإذا أراد أن

يقوم فليسلم، فليست الأولى بأحق من الآخرة.»

«When one of you reaches an assembly (of Muslims), let him give them *salām*. When he wishes to depart, let him give them *salām* as well. Indeed, the first

¹ See, for example, *ar-Rā'd* 13:24.

² Recorded by at-Tirmithī. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Riyāḍ uṣ-Ṣāliḥīn* no. 893).

³ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 525).

(*salām*) is not more rightful than the last.»¹

PRONOUNCING ALLĀH'S NAME OVER THE FOOD

Before starting to eat, we should pronounce Allāh's name saying, "*Bismi 'llāh* — with Allāh's name (I eat)."

'Umar Bin Abī Salamah (رضي الله عنه) reported that he was a young boy under custody of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), and that while he ate, his hand used to roam all over the plate. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) instructed him:

«يا غلام، سمِّ الله، وكل بيمينك، وكل مما يليك.»

«Young boy! Pronounce Allāh's name, eat with your right hand, and eat from your side.»²

Pronouncing Allāh's name brings blessings to the food. Waḥshiyy Bin Ḥarb (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man said, "O Allāh's Messenger! We eat but do not feel satisfied." He asked, «فلعلكم تفترون؟» «Do you possibly eat separately?» He said, "Yes." Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then said:

«اجتمعوا على طعامكم، واذكروا اسم الله عليه، يُبارك لكم فيه.»

«Gather upon your food; and pronounce Allāh's name — it would then be blessed for you.»³

Pronouncing Allāh's name over the food prevents Satan from having any part in it. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«إذا دخل الرجل بيته، فذكر الله عند دخوله وعند طعامه، قال

الشیطان لأصحابه: "لا مبيت لكم ولا عشاء." وإذا دخل فلم

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 183).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 142 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 664).

يذكر الله عند دخوله، قال الشيطان: "أدرکتُم المبيتَ." وإذا لم يذكر الله عند طعامه قال: "أدرکتُم المبيتَ والعشاءَ."»

«If a person utters Allāh's name when he enters his home and when he eats, Satan tells his companions, "Leave! There is no abode or food for you (in this house tonight)." But if he enters his house without mentioning Allāh's name, Satan says to his companions, "You have secured lodging." Then if he does not mention Allāh over his food Satan says, "You have secured both lodging and food."»¹

If a person forgets pronouncing Allāh's name before he starts eating and remembers later during the meal, he may still pronounce it. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أكل أحدكم فليذكر اسم الله، فإن نسي أن يذكر الله في أوله فليقل: "بسم الله أوله وآخره."»

«When one of you eats, let him utter Allāh's name. If he forgets uttering Allāh's name in the beginning, let him say, "*Bismi 'llāhi awwalahū wa-'ākhīrah* — with Allāh's name (I eat) from its beginning to its end."»²

It is important to note here that there is no authentic supplication or *thikr* to be said before or during eating — except for pronouncing Allāh's (ﷻ) name. Other supplications that people commonly say before eating are unauthentic and should be avoided.

AVOIDING CRITICIZING THE FOOD

All *ḥalāl* food is a favor from Allāh. We should not criticize it,

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1965).

because that could reflect dissatisfaction and ingratitude toward Allāh (ﷻ). Furthermore, that could offend and hurt the host.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«ما عاب رسول الله طعاماً قط. إن اشتهاه أكله، وإن كرهه تركه.»

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) never criticized any food. If he had desire for it he would eat it, and if he disliked it he would leave it." ¹

MODERATENESS IN EATING

Whether at a *walimah*, a restaurant, or eating at home, and whether the food is varied and delicious or plain and unappealing, we should never eat excessively. In addition to its harms to the health, overeating causes laziness and averts from remembering Allāh and being devoted in worshipping Him.

An important quality of a believer is that he does not overeat. Abū Hurayrah, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, and 'Abdullāh Bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن المؤمن يأكل (ويشرب) في معي واحد،
والكافر يأكل (ويشرب) في سبعة أمعاء.»

«Indeed, a believer eats in one intestine (i.e., is satisfied with little food), and a *kāfir* eats in seven intestines (eats too much).»²

The Prophet (ﷺ) strongly prohibited gluttony and indicated that much of what the people eat is not necessary for them — rather, harmful! Al-Miqdām Bin Ma'd Yakrib (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما ملأ آدمي وعاء شراً من بطن. بحسب ابن آدم أكلات»

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

يُقِمِّنْ صُلْبَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالَةَ، فَثُلُثٌ لَطْعَامِهِ، وَثُلُثٌ

لشرابيه، وَثُلُثٌ لِنَفْسِهِ.»

«A human being cannot fill a container worse than his stomach. Sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his back straight. But if that is not possible, he should reserve one third (of his stomach) for his food, one third for his drink, and one third for his breathing.»¹

THE BLESSING OF EATING WITH OTHERS

We have seen earlier (Jābir's *ḥadīth* p. 109 & Waḥshiyy's *ḥadīth* p. 121) that eating with other people brings Allāh's blessings. To the same meaning, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«كُلُوا جَمِيعاً، وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا، فَإِنَّ الْبَرَكَهَ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ.»

«Eat together and not separately, for blessings come with company.»²

When eating in company, the food can suffice more people. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«طَعَامُ الْإِثْنَيْنِ كَافِي الثَّلَاثَةِ، وَطَعَامُ الثَّلَاثَةِ كَافِي الْأَرْبَعَةِ.»

«The food of two persons is sufficient for three, and the food of three persons is sufficient for four.»³

SITTING HUMBLY AND EATING FROM AROUND THE SIDES

Arrogance is a sign of ingratitude toward Allāh's favors. When eating,

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2265).

² Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 4500 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1686).

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

one is not supposed to recline or sit in a haughty manner; rather, one should sit humbly and eat with consideration.

'Abdullāh Bin Busr (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) had a large platter called *al-Gharrā'* (the white one). It was so large that four men were needed to carry it. One day, a goat was given as gift to the Prophet (ﷺ) — and the food was then scarce. He told his family:

«أُطْبِخُوا هَذِهِ الشَّاةَ، وَانْظُرُوا إِلَى هَذَا الدَّقِيقِ

فَاخْبِرُوهُ، أُطْبِخُوا وَأَثَرِدُوا عَلَيْهِ.»

«Cook this goat, and take this flour and bake it. Cook and mix the bread with the meat.»

In the early morning, after the people had prayed the *ḍuḥā* (mid-morning) voluntary prayers, *al-Gharrā'* was brought full of *tharīd*¹. The people sat around it, and when they crowded, the Prophet (ﷺ) kneeled (with his knees and toes touching the ground). A Bedouin said, "What kind of sitting is this?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَنِي عَبْدًا كَرِيمًا، وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا عَنِيدًا.»

«Indeed, Allāh has made me an honored servant of His, and has not made me a stubborn tyrant.»

Then he (ﷺ) said:

«كُلُوا مِنْ حَوَالَيْهَا وَدَعُوا ذِرْوَتَهَا، يُبَارَكُ فِيهَا.»

«Eat from around the sides (of the platter), and spare the raised (central) part — it will then be blessed for you.»²

In some of the reports of this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) added:

¹ A dish made from bread and meat broth, with or without meat.

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghālīl* no. 1966, 1981 and *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 393).

«خَذُوا فَكَلُوا؛ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، لَيُفْتَحَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَرْضُ
فَارِسَ وَالرُّومِ، حَتَّى يَكْثُرَ الطَّعَامُ، فَلَا يَذْكُرُ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.»

«Take and eat. By the One in Whose hand is Muhammad's soul, the lands of the Persians and the Romans will be opened up for you, until the food will be so plentiful that Allāh's name will not be uttered over it.»¹

This *ḥadīth* indicates that Allāh sends down blessings onto the center of a platter or tray from which a number of people are eating. If they eat from the sides and leave the center, the blessings will continue to flow from the center to all the sides.

To the same meaning, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«الْبَرَكَةُ تَنْزِلُ وَسَطَ الطَّعَامِ، فَكَلُوا مِنْ حَافَتَيْهِ، وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ وَسْطِهِ.»

«Blessings descend upon the center of the food; so eat from the sides and do not eat from the center.»²

AVOIDING WASTING FOOD

Nowadays, we see that many Muslims allow large quantities of food to go to waste, especially during *walīmahs* and other social functions — at the time when many other Muslims suffer from hunger and famines. This is contrary to the teachings of the Sunnah. The Prophet (ﷺ) was keen to retrieve even the small amount of food that stuck to his hand or plate.

Ka'b Bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to eat with three fingers³. After finishing, he (ﷺ) would not wash his

1 Recorded by Abū Bakr ash-Shāfi'ī (in *al-Fawā'id*), al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 393).

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1980/1).

3 Note that there is nothing wrong in eating with a spoon or fork. However, it is more rewarding to follow the Prophet's (ﷺ) way of eating with three fingers. This applies

fingers until had licked them.¹

Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his followers to lick their fingers and plates (after having eaten), and he (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ فِي أَيِّ طَعَامِكُمُ الْبَرَكَةُ.»

«You do not know which part of your food has the blessings.»²

Even if some food falls from one's hand, he should not be reluctant to pick it up, clean it, and eat it! Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَحْضُرُ أَحَدَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ شَأْنِهِ، حَتَّى يَحْضُرَهُ عِنْدَ طَعَامِهِ. فَإِذَا وَقَعَتْ لُقْمَةٌ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلْيَأْخُذْهَا، فَلْيُمِطْ مَا كَانَ بِهَا مِنْ أَذَى، وَلْيَأْكُلْهَا وَلَا يَدْعُهَا لِلشَّيْطَانِ. وَلَا يَمْسَحَ يَدَهُ بِالْمُنْدِيلِ، حَتَّى يَلْعَقَ أَصَابِعَهُ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَدْرِي فِي أَيِّ طَعَامِهِ الْبَرَكَةُ.»

«Indeed, Satan comes to each of you during all of his affairs, including his eating. If one of you drops a bite of food, let him pick it up, remove any dirt from it, and eat it and not leave it for Satan. Furthermore, one should not wipe his hand with a handkerchief (from the remnants of food) — until he had licked his fingers, for he cannot know in which part of the food is the blessing.»³

PRAISING ALLĀH AND SUPPLICATING TO HIM AFTER EATING

After eating, one should express his gratitude to the One Who granted him the food by praising Him. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's

particularly to food items that come in big chunks, such as bread or dates.

1 Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

2 Recorded by Muslim and others.

3 Recorded by Muslim.

Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن الله ليرضى عن العبد أن يأكل الأكلة فيحمده عليها،
أو يشرب الشربة فيحمده عليها.»

«Indeed, Allāh is pleased with a servant (of His) who eats some food and praises Him for it, or drinks a drink and praises Him for it.»¹

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من أطعمه الله طعاماً فليقل: "اللهم بارك لنا فيه، وأطعمنا خيراً منه." ومن سقاه الله لبناً فليقل: "اللهم بارك لنا فيه، وزدنا منه." فإنه ليس شيء يَجْزِي من الطعام والشراب غير اللبن.»

«He whom Allāh feeds food should say, "Allāhumma bārik lanā fihi wa-rzuqnā khayran minh — O Allāh, bless it for us and provide us with a better food." And he whom Allāh gives milk to drink should say, "Allāhumma bārik lanā fihi wa-zidnā minh — O Allāh, bless it for us and give us more of it," because no food or drink is sufficient (in nutrition) except milk.»²

Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) finished eating he would say:

«الحمد لله حمداً كثيراً طيباً مباركاً فيه، غير مكافئ، ولا مودّع، ولا مُستغنى عنه ربنا.»

«Al-ḥamdu lillāhi, ḥamdan kathīran ṭayyiban

¹ Recorded by Muslim and others.

² Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi' no. 6045 & aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah no. 2320).

mubārakan fihi, ghayra mukāfa'in, wa-lā muwadda'in, wa-lā mustaghnan 'anhu rabbanā — All praise is due to Allāh — a praise that is plentiful, pure, and full of blessings. (Your sustenance) cannot be equally repaid, we consistently need it, and we cannot live without it, O our Lord!»¹

Mu'āth Bin Anas al-Juhanī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من أكل طعاماً، ثم قال: "الحمد لله الذي أطعمني هذا الطعام ورزقنيهِ من غير حولٍ مِنِّي ولا قُوَّة،" غُفِرَ له ما تقدَّم من ذنبِهِ.»

«Whoever eats some food and then says, "Al-ḥamdu li-'llāh il-lathī aṭ'amanī hāthā wa-razaqanīhi min ghayri ḥawlin minnī wa-lā quwwah — All praise is due to Allāh who fed me this and provided it for me without any might or power from myself," all his past sins will be forgiven.»²

A man who served the Prophet (ﷺ) for eight years said that when he brought the food before him, the Prophet (ﷺ) would say, «بِسْمِ اللَّهِ.» «Bismillāh — with Allāh's name.» When he finished eating, he would say:

«اللهم أطعمت وأسقيت، وأغنيت وأقنيت،

وهديت وأحييت، فلك الحمد على ما أعطيت.»

«Allāhumma aṭ'amtā wa-asqayta, wa-aghnayta wa-aqnayta, wa-hadayta wa-aḥyayta, falaka 'l-ḥamdu 'alā mā aṭ'ayta — O Allāh, You have fed (me), given (me) drink, sufficed (me) from needing others, endowed (me) with everything, guided (me), and given (me) life; so to You is all praise for all that

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and others.

² Recorded by Ibn Mājah, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi' no. 6086 & Irwā' ul-Ghalīl no. 1989).

«You have granted.»¹

SUPPLICATING FOR THE HOSTS

In addition to praising Allāh, one should show gratitude to the people who fed him. This is best done by supplicating for them.

Al-Miqdād Bin al-Aswad (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) would supplicate for those who fed him or gave him something to drink, saying:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَطْعِمْ مَنْ أَطْعَمَنِي وَأَسْقِ مَنْ سَقَانِي.»

«*Allāhumma aṭ'im man aṭ'amanī, wa-sqi man saqānī* — O Allāh, feed the one who fed me, and give drink to the one who gave me drink.»²

'Abdullāh Bin Busr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once stayed as a guest with his father. They put before him some food and he ate. Then they brought some drink, and he drank from it then handed it to the person sitting to his right. As the Prophet (ﷺ) mounted his animal to leave, 'Abdullāh's father asked him to supplicate for them, and he (ﷺ) said:

«اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِيْمَا رَزَقْتَهُمْ، وَأَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ، وَأَرْحَمْهُمْ.»

«*Allāhumma bārik lahum fīmā razaqtahum, wa-ghfir lahum, wa-rhamhum* — O Allāh! Bless for them that which You provided them, forgive them, and have mercy upon them.»³

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once visited Sa'd Bin 'Ubādah (رضي الله عنه). Sa'd offered him some raisins, and the Prophet (ﷺ) ate and then said:

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā'ī (in *al-Kubrā*), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 71 & *al-Kalim uṭ-Ṭayyib*).

² Recorded by Muslim and others.

³ Recorded by Muslim.

«أَفْطَرَ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ، وَأَكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْأَبْرَارُ،

وَصَلَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ.»

«*Aftara 'indakum uṣ-ṣā'mūn, wa-akala ṭa'āmakum ul-abrār, wa-ṣallat 'alaykum ul-malā'ikah* — May the fasting people break their fast at your place; and may the righteous eat from your food; and may the angels supplicate for you.»¹

DEPARTURE

If one is invited for a meal, he should not inconvenience the host and his household by coming too early and waiting for the food to be ready. Allāh (ﷻ) instructed the believers about this etiquette in regard to the Prophet (ﷺ):

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ، إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ

إِلَى طَعَامٍ، غَيْرَ نَظَرِينَ إِنَّهُ» الْأَحْزَابُ ٥٣

«O you who believe! Do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are invited for a meal — without awaiting its readiness.»²

Also, one should not inconvenience the host by staying too long after finishing eating. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا، فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا، وَلَا

مُسْتَأْنَسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ؛ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي

مِنْكُمْ؛ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ.» الْأَحْزَابُ ٥٣

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1137 (from the report of Ibn uz-Zubayr) & *Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 170).

² *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:53.

«But when you are invited, enter; and when you have eaten, disperse without seeking to remain for conversation. Indeed, that was troubling the Prophet, and he is shy of (dismissing) you. But Allāh is not shy of the truth.»¹

At departure, one should give *salām* as he did when he entered. In this regard, we again cite Abū Hurayrah's (رضي الله عنه) *ḥadīth* that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا انْتَهَى أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى الْمَجْلِسِ فَلْيَسَلِّمْ، فَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَقُومَ فَلْيَسَلِّمْ، فَلَيْسَتْ الْأُولَى بِأَحَقَّ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ.»

«When one of you reaches an assembly (of Muslims), let him give them *salām*. When he wishes to depart, let him give them *salām* as well. Indeed, the first (*salām*) is not more rightful than the last.»²

1 *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:53.

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 183).

CONSUMMATING THE MARRIAGE

Advising the Married Couple

Prior to leaving the newlywed couple to themselves on their wedding night, it is important to give them advice regarding the Islāmic guidelines for marital intimacy, rights and obligations between the spouses, and other issues of importance for them. Most of this necessary information is included in this book and its two sequels.¹

Kindness to the Bride

The husband should be extremely kind to his bride on their first night together, especially if she is a virgin. He should understand that this night marks the beginning of a totally new life for her. This may make her nervous and slow in cooperating with him. So, he should not brutally force himself on to her. If she does not appear to be fully ready on the first night, he should work on easing her emotions while waiting for the ultimate union between them one or more days later — as might be necessary.

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was very kind and gentle with 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) on her first night with him. He gave her some milk to drink, allowed her young girlfriends to remain with her for a while, and talked to them jokingly — so as to make her feel at ease.

Asmā' Bint Yazīd Bin as-Sakan² reported that she adorned 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) for the Prophet (ﷺ) and then invited him in. He came and sat next to her. He was given a large cup of milk. He drank some of it and then gave it to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) who shyly lowered her head.

1 See "Closer Than a Garment" and "The Fragile Vessels" by the Author.

2 She was Mu'th Bin Jabal's cousin; one of the *Anṣār* women who gave her covenant to the Prophet (ﷺ) during Bay'at ur-Riḍwān.

Asmā' scolded her saying, "Do not reject Allāh's Messenger's offer." So she took the cup and drank some, and he then told her, «أَعْطِي تَرَبِّكَ.» «Give your friend.» Asmā' said, "O Allāh's Messenger! First take it back and drink from it, then give it to me with your hand." He took it, drank from it, and gave it to Asmā' who sat down and drank, making sure that her lips were on the spot where the Prophet (ﷺ) drank ¹. Then he pointed to some other women who were with her and said, «نَاوِلِي صَوَاحِبَكِ.» «Give your friends.» They said, "We have no desire for it." He said:

«لَا تَجْمَعَنَّ جُوعاً وَكَذِباً.»

«Do not combine hunger with lying.» ²

Praying Two Rak'ahs Together

It is recommended for the newlywed couple to pray two *rak'āt* in *jamā'ah*, with the groom leading the prayer. This would be a great indication that, from their first night, they meet together on an act of obedience to Allāh (ﷻ).

Abū Sa'īd, the *mawlā* (freed slave) of Abū Usayd, reported that while he was still a slave, he got married, and a number of the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم) attended his *walīmah*, including Ibn Mas'ūd, Ḥuṭhayfah, and Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنهم). When the *iqāmah* was given for a prayer, Abū Tharr advanced to lead them, but they all told him, "Hold off (because the host has the right to lead)." He asked, "Is that so?" They said, "Yes." Thus, Abū Sa'īd advanced and led them in the prayer, even though he was an owned slave. After the prayer, they taught him:

"When your bride comes to you, pray two *rak'āt* with her, then ask Allāh to grant you of her good and protect you from her evil, and then you are free to do what you wish with your bride." ³

¹ Seeking the blessing from Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) touch.

² Recorded by Aḥmad. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 92).

³ Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah and 'Abd ur-Razzāq. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 94).

Shaqīq reported that a man called Ḥarīz came to 'Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd and said, "I have just married a young virgin, and I fear that she might dislike me." Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Indeed, love (between the spouses) is from Allāh, and dislike is from Satan who wants to make you dislike what Allāh made lawful to you. When she comes to you, tell her to pray two *rak'āt* behind you. Then say:

«اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِي أَهْلِي، وَبَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِيَّ. اللَّهُمَّ أَجْمَعْ بَيْنَنَا مَا جَمَعْتَ بَيْنَهُمَا، وَفَرِّقْ بَيْنَنَا إِذَا فَرَّقْتَ إِلَى خَيْرٍ.»

'Allāhumma bārik lī fī ahlī, wa-bārik lahum fiyya. Allāhumma ajma' baynanā ma jamā'ta bikhayr, wa-farriq baynanā iṭhā farraqta ilā khayr — O Allāh, bless my wife for me, and bless me for her. O Allāh, let our union be upon what is good, and let our separation, when you separate between us, be to what is good." ¹

Invoking Allāh's Blessing

After praying the two *rak'āt* together, it is recommended for the husband to make supplications and invoke Allāh's blessings on himself and his bride.

'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا أَفَادَ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَةً أَوْ خَادِمًا أَوْ دَابَّةً فَلْيَأْخُذْ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا، وَلْيُسَمِّ اللَّهَ، وَلْيَدْعُ بِالْبَرَكَةِ، وَلْيَقُلْ: "بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهَا. اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهَا وَخَيْرِ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ." وَإِنْ كَانَ بَعِيرًا فَلْيَأْخُذْ بِذُرْوَةِ سَنَامِهِ.»

¹ Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah and 'Abd ur-Razzāq. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 96).

«When one of you acquires a wife, a servant, or a riding animal, he should hold her (or it) by the forehead, invoke Allāh's blessing, and say:

“*Bismillāh, allāhumma bārik lī fihā. Allāhumma innī as'aluka min khayrihā wa-khayri mā jabaltahā 'alayhi, wa-a'ūthu bika min sharrihā wa-sharri mā jabaltahā 'alayh* — With Allāh's name. O Allāh, bless her for me. O Allāh, I ask You to grant me of her / its good, and the good upon which You created her / it; and I ask You to protect me from her / its evil and any evil upon which You created her / it.”

And if it is a camel (that he acquires), he should hold it by the peak of its hump (and say the same).¹

Islāmic Etiquettes of Marital Intimacy

There are important guidelines for the spouses to observe when they intimately approach one another. In what follows, we briefly outline some of them, keeping the detailed coverage for the sequel to this book: “Closer than a Garment”.

SUPPLICATION BEFORE INTERCOURSE

Even at the peak of his passion, a believer does not forget his Lord (ﷻ). He remembers that his intercourse with his wife is a means of fulfilling many noble purposes — not only his lust (see Chapter 1). One of these noble purposes is producing a good progeny. Thus, it is important to supplicate to Allāh to keep Satan away from him and his progeny. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لو أن أحدكم إذا أراد أن يأتي أهله قال: «بسم الله، اللهم جنبنا الشيطان، وجنب الشيطان ما رزقنا،» فإنه إن قضى بينهما ولدٌ من ذلك لم يضره الشيطان أبداً.»

¹ A combined report recorded by al-Bukhārī, Ibn Abī Shaybah, and others.

«When one of you wants to approach his wife, if he says:

“*Bismillāh. Allāhumma jannib nash-Shayṭān, wa-jannib ish-Shayṭāna mā razaqtanā* — With the Name of Allāh. O Allāh, keep Satan away from us, and keep him away from what You grant us,”

If it is then decreed that they have a child (from that intercourse), Satan will never harm it.¹

MISCELLANEOUS ĀDĀB FOR INTERCOURSE

The following is a list of additional important *ādāb* that should be observed when being intimate or having intercourse with one's spouse.

1. The man may only have intercourse with his wife in her front entry (vagina). Approaching her from the back entry is a major sin.
2. During his wife's menses, a man may not have intercourse with her, but may otherwise enjoy other parts of her body. Performing intercourse with a menstruating woman is a major sin.
3. A person becomes *junub* (unclean) in one of two ways:
 - a) By climaxing and ejaculation, which results from intercourse, wet dreams, foreplay, etc.
 - b) By performing intercourse — regardless of whether it results in ejaculation or not.
4. A *junub* person must take a *ghusl* (bath) before being able to pray. It is further recommended for a *junub* to take the *ghusl* before going to sleep or mentioning Allāh. If that is not possible, one should at least wash his (or her) private parts and perform *wuḍū'*.
5. It is strongly prohibited for the two spouses to disclose to others the secrets of what takes place during their intimacy sessions.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

The Morning Following the Wedding

On the morning following the wedding night, it is recommended for the husband to visit his family members and relatives, greet them, and supplicate for them. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“In the morning following Allāh’s Messenger’s (ﷺ) wedding with Zaynab, he visited his wives and exchanged with them *salām* and supplications. This was his practice on the morning following his wedding.”¹

Honeymoon

A common practice is that the newlywed would leave right after their wedding on a “honeymoon” trip. Depending on their finances, that trip could be to a country or area that has attractions for tourism.

There is no doubt that the honeymoon is one of the non-Muslims’ practices that many Muslims rush to imitate. It is usually an occasion for adding to one’s record of sins: it involves mixing with many non-Muslims, listening to music, going to restaurants where alcohol is served, going to beaches and other attractions where the people are improperly attired, and so on.

If the newlywed get a few days off from work on the occasion of their wedding, they should not use them in disobeying Allāh. Rather, they can take the chance to go on a ‘*Umrah*’ trip or for visiting some family members to preserve the kinship ties and invite them to the good teachings of Islām.

¹ Recorded by an-Nasā’ī and Ibn Sa’d. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 138).

FORBIDDEN MARRIAGES

Permanently Prohibited Women

INTRODUCTION

Permanently prohibited women are the women that a man may never marry. Permanent prohibition can be a result of blood, marriage, or foster (breast-feeding) relationships. A man is a *maḥram* to any woman who is permanently prohibited to him.

Allāh (ﷻ) mentions the permanently prohibited women in the following *āyāt*:

«وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ،

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٢﴾ النساء

«And do not marry the women whom your fathers had married — except what has already passed. Indeed, that was a shameful and hateful act (to Allāh), and an evil way.»¹

«حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبِّبُكُمُ الَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُم مِّن نِّسَائِكُمُ الَّتِي دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ، فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُم بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ، وَخَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِّنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ، وَأَنَّ

¹ An-Nisā’ 4:22.

تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا

رَحِيمًا ﴿النساء ٢٣﴾

«Prohibited to you (for marriage) are your mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal aunts, maternal aunts, brother's daughters, sister's daughters, foster mothers who breast-fed you, foster sisters, wives' mothers, step-daughters under your custody and born of your wives with whom you have had intercourse — but if you have not had intercourse with them, there is no sin upon you (if you marry their daughters) —, the wives of your sons who are your own offspring, and that you simultaneously marry two sisters — except for what has already passed. Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.»¹

﴿وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ، إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ، كِتَابَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ، وَأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ، مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ، فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً، وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا تَرَضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ

عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿النساء ٢٤﴾

«And (also prohibited to you are) all married women, except those (captives and slaves) that your right hands possess. This is Allāh's decree upon you. And lawful to you are all (women) beyond these, provided that you seek them (in marriage) with gifts from your monies, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse. So for those whom you enjoy (in marriage) from among them, give them their due compensation (*mahr*) as an obligation. And there is no blame upon you for what you mutually agree (to

¹ An-Nisā' 4:23.

give) beyond the obligation. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Wise.»¹

PROHIBITION BASED ON BLOOD RELATIONSHIPS

From the above, we conclude that the women who are permanently prohibited for a man because of blood relationships are seven types:

1. His mothers (including his grandmothers from both sides, and further up).
2. His daughters and granddaughters (and further down).
3. His sisters (both full and half-sisters).
4. His paternal aunts (including his father's, grandfathers', mother's, and grandmothers' paternal aunts, and further up).
5. His maternal aunts (including his father's, grandfathers', mother's, and grandmothers' maternal aunts, and further up).
6. His brothers' (both full and half-brothers) daughters and granddaughters (and further down).
7. His sisters' (both full and half-sisters) daughters and granddaughters (and further down).

PROHIBITION BASED ON MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

The women who are permanently prohibited for a man because of marital relationships are four types:

1. The wives of his fathers (and grandfathers, and further up). This prohibition occurs as soon as a father executes his marriage contract on a woman, even if he does not perform intercourse with her.

¹ An-Nisā' 4:24.

2. The wives of his sons (and grandsons, and further down). This prohibition occurs as soon as a son executes his marriage contract on a woman, even if he does not perform intercourse with her.
3. His wife's mothers (and grandmothers, and further up). This prohibition occurs as soon as a man executes his marriage contract on a woman, even if he does not perform intercourse with her.
4. The daughters (and granddaughters, and further down) of the wives with whom he performed intercourse.

In regard to step-daughters (Case 4 above), most scholars hold the opinion that they are all prohibited, without exception — as soon as their step-father performs intercourse with their mother. They say that the “custody” restriction in the above *āyah* (4:23) is a description applicable to all step-daughters.

However, a very viable opinion is that the “custody” is intended as a restriction, and that a step-daughter who did not live in her step-father's house is only temporarily prohibited to him — as long as he is married to her mother. This opinion was held by ‘Alī (ﷺ).

Mālik Bin Aws Bin al-Hadathān reported that he had a wife who bore him children and then died. He was extremely sorrowful for her death. He met ‘Alī (ﷺ) who asked him, “What is wrong with you?” He replied, “My wife has died.” He asked him, “Did she have a daughter?” He said, “Yes, and she is at aṭ-Ṭā’if (a town to the south of Makkah).” He asked, “Was she ever under your custody?” He said, “No.” He suggested, “Marry her then.” He said, “But what about Allāh's prohibition of ‘Your step-daughters who are under your custody’?” He said, “Indeed, she was not under your custody. Indeed, that only applies if she lived in your house.”¹

PROHIBITION BASED ON MILK RELATIONSHIPS

The milk of the breast-feeding mother gives the baby nutrition and growth. When a woman breast-feeds a baby, he becomes related to her

¹ Recorded by ‘Abd ur-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ul-Ghalīl* no. 1880).

in a way similar to her delivered child.

‘Ā’ishah, Ibn ‘Abbās, and ‘Alī (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن الله حَرَّمَ من الرِّضَاعِ ما حَرَّمَ مِنَ الْوِلَادَةِ (النَّسَبِ).»

«Indeed, Allāh has prohibited (of marriages), based on breast-feeding, what He has prohibited based on birth (or blood-relationships).»¹

However, for breast-feeding to result in prohibitive relationships, it must satisfy the following conditions:

1. It should be performed on five or more distinct suckles.
2. The baby should be hungry and should drink its fill in each suckle.
3. All prohibiting suckles should take place before the baby's weaning at the age of two.

‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا تُحَرِّمُ الْمِصَّةُ وَلَا الْمِصَّتَانِ.»

«One or two suckles do not cause prohibition.»²

Umm ul-Faḍl (ﷺ) reported that when Allāh's Prophet (ﷺ) was in her house once, a bedouin came and asked him, “O Prophet of Allāh! I have just married a second wife, but my first wife claims that she suckled her on one or two occasions.” Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا تُحَرِّمُ الْإِمْلَاجَةُ وَلَا الْإِمْلَاجَتَانِ.»

«One or two suckles do not cause prohibition.»³

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. Review *Irwā’ul-Ghalīl* no. 1876 for the various narrations of this *ḥadīth*.

² Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

³ Recorded by Muslim, Ibn Mājah, and others.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَنْظَرْنَ مِنْ إِخْوَانِكُنَّ، فَإِنَّمَا الرِّضَاعَةُ مِنَ الْمَجَاعَةِ.»

«Check (O Women) who are your true brothers, because breast-feeding (that causes brotherhood) is that which satisfies the hunger.»¹

Umm Salamah and ‘Abdullāh Bin az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا يُحَرِّمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعِ إِلَّا مَا فَتَّقَ الْأَمْعَاءُ وَكَانَ قَبْلَ الْفِطَامِ.»

«Breast-feeding does not cause prohibition unless it expands the intestines (i.e., satisfies the baby’s hunger), and takes place before weaning.»²

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

“It was first revealed in the Qur’ān that, ‘Ten known suckles cause prohibition.’ Five of those were then dropped, and it became, ‘Five known suckles cause prohibition.’ This was the final state when Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) passed away.”³

In the following, we mean by “foster mother” the woman who breast-fed a person according to the above-listed conditions. And a “foster father” is the man who was married to the foster mother at the time of breast-feeding that person; i.e, he is the man who caused the foster mother’s milk.

In the following table, we list the eight common types of women who are permanently prohibited for a man because of breast-feeding relationships:

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 2150 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 7495, 7633).

3 Recorded by Mālik, Muslim, and others.

	Foster Relationship	Counts as
1	Foster mother	Mother
2	Foster daughter	Daughter
3	Foster mother’s mother	Maternal grandmother
4	Foster father’s mother	Paternal grandmother
5	Foster mother’s sister	Maternal aunt
6	Foster father’s sister	Paternal aunt
7	Foster mother’s granddaughter	Niece
8	Foster sister	Sister

A man’s foster sisters are of three types:

	Description of the Sister	Counts as
a	Breast-fed by his foster mother, and from the same husband’s milk	Full sister
b	Breast-fed by his foster mother, but from the milk of two different husbands	Half- maternal sister
c	Breast-fed by a wife of his foster father other than his foster mother	Half-paternal sister

It is important to note here that the foster relationships only apply to the breast-fed person and his offspring. They do not apply to other relatives, such as his blood brothers and sisters.

For example, consider a man “A” has a foster sister “B”, a blood brother “C”, and a son “D”. In this case, “A” and “D” are prohibited from marrying “B”, but “C” is not.

Temporarily Prohibited Women or Marriages

Temporary prohibition is that which prevents a man from marrying a woman under certain conditions. If the conditions cease to hold, the prohibition ends and the woman becomes permissible for him.

The temporarily prohibited women are the following:

MARRYING MORE THAN FOUR WOMEN

If a man has four wives, all other women become temporarily prohibited for him. This means that he may not consider any additional woman for marriage unless he divorces one of his wives.

It is not allowed for a man to have more than four wives in Islām. Even for those who had more than four wives before embracing Islām, the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded them to select four of them and divorce the rest. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Ghaylān Bin Salamah had ten wives when he embraced Islām. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) told him:

«أَمْسِكْ مِنْهُنَّ أَرْبَعًا، وَفَارِقْ سَائِرَهُنَّ.»¹

«Keep four of them and divorce the rest.»¹

SIMULTANEOUSLY MARRYING TWO SISTERS

As long as a man is married to a particular woman, all of her sisters become temporarily prohibited for him; he may not marry any of them unless he divorces their sister.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا تُنكِحُ الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى عَمَّتِهَا، وَلَا الْعَمَّةَ عَلَى ابْنَةِ أَخِيهَا، وَلَا

الْمَرْأَةَ عَلَى خَالَتِهَا، وَلَا الْخَالَهَ عَلَى بِنْتِ أَخْتِهَا، وَلَا الْكَبْرَى

عَلَى الصُّغْرَى، وَلَا الصُّغْرَى عَلَى الْكَبْرَى.»

«A woman may not be simultaneously married with

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1883).

her paternal aunt (to the same man), nor a paternal aunt with her niece, nor a niece with her maternal aunt, nor a maternal aunt with her niece, nor an older sister with her younger sister, nor a younger sister with her older sister.»¹

SIMULTANEOUSLY MARRYING AUNTS AND THEIR NIECES

We see from Abū Hurayrah's above *hadīth* that it is not permissible to simultaneously marry an aunt and her niece. A man would have to divorce one of the two before he may marry the other.

To the same meaning, Abū Hurayrah, Jābir, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Sa'īd, Ibn 'Umar, and 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) all reported² that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا يُجْمَعُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْأَةِ وَعَمَّتِهَا، وَلَا بَيْنَ الْمَرْأَةِ وَخَالَتِهَا.»

«One may not simultaneously have (as wives) a woman and her paternal aunt, nor a woman and her maternal aunt.»³

WOMEN MARRIED TO OTHER MEN

This is clearly expressed in the above *āyah* of *Sūrat un-Nisā'* (4:24).

The same applies to a woman who has been divorced a non-terminal divorce (first two times) and is still in her *'iddah*. Such a woman is considered to be still under her husband's charge and no one may approach her for marriage before the completion of her *'iddah*.

ADULTERESSES

It is prohibited to marry a woman who is known to be an adulteress or a prostitute — unless she had demonstratively repented. Allāh (ﷻ)

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1882).

² The various narrations of this *hadīth* are collected by al-Albānī in *Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 1882.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

says:

«الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً، وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ، وَحُرِّمَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ» النور ٣

«A fornicator does not marry but a female fornicator or polytheist; and none marries a female fornicator but a fornicator or a polytheist. Such a thing is forbidden to the believers.»¹

Ḥabīb al-Mu'allim reported that a man from al-Kūfah (in Iraq) came to 'Amr Bin Shu'ayb² and said, "Would it not surprise you to learn that al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī) says that a whipped fornicator may not marry but a female whipped fornicator like himself?" 'Amr replied, "What is it that surprises you? This has been reported to us from Sa'īd al-Maqbirī from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يَنْكِحُ الزَّانِي الْمَجْلُودَ إِلَّا مِثْلَهُ.»

«A whipped fornicator may not marry but one who is like himself»³

In regard to this *ḥadīth*, ash-Shawkānī (رحمته الله) said:

"This is a general description applicable to anyone who is known to commit *zinā*. It presents evidence that it is not permissible for a woman to marry a man who is known to commit *zinā*. Similarly, it is not permissible for a man to marry a woman who is known to commit *zinā*. This is further indicated by the *āyah* (*an-Nūr* 24:3)."⁴

1 *An-Nūr* 24:3.

2 'Amr Bin Shu'ayb is the son of Shu'ayb Bin Muḥammad Bin 'Abdillāh Bin 'Amr Bin al-Āṣ. He is thus the great-grandson of 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه).

3 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2444).

4 *Nayl ul-Awṭār* 6:283.

'Amr Bin Shu'ayb also reported from his father from his grandfather that Marthid Bin Abī Marthid al-Ghanawī used to help the Muslim captives run away from Makkah. A prostitute in Makkah called 'Anāq was his girlfriend. He came to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and asked him, "O Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), may I marry 'Anāq?" Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) did not say anything until the above *āyah* was revealed, so he summoned him and said, «لا تَنْكِحَهَا.» «Do not marry her.»¹

Ibn ul-Qayyim (رحمته الله) said:

"What explains the prohibition is that this crime causes harm to the husband's mattress (i.e., honor), and spoils the kinship relationships that Allāh established among the people so that they would pursue their affairs ... Thus, one of the beauties of the *sharī'ah* is its prohibition of marrying an adulteress — until she repents and purifies her womb."²

Ibn ul-Qayyim (رحمته الله) also said:

"As for marrying an adulteress, Allāh has indicated its prohibition in *Sūrat un-Nūr*, and He indicated that anyone who marries her is a fornicator or a *mushrik*. That is because he either believes in Allāh's commands and the obligation of following them, or does not believe. In the latter case, he would be a *mushrik*, and in the first he would be a fornicator because he knew Allāh's ruling and disobeyed it."³

MUSHRIK WOMEN

A *mushrik* woman may not be married unless she embraces Islām. The

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1886).

2 *Ighāthat ul-Lahfān* 1:66.

3 *Zād ul-Ma'ād* 5:114.

subject of marrying non-Muslim women is covered in detail in a subsequent section.

MARRIAGE DURING *IHRĀM*

A person who goes for *Hajj* or *Umrah* is prohibited from courting or marrying while he is in the state of *ihrām* ¹.

‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لَا يَنْكِحُ الْمُحْرَمُ، وَلَا يُنْكَحُ، وَلَا يَخْطُبُ. »

«A person in a state of *ihrām* may not marry, be married, or propose to someone (for marriage).» ²

MARRYING A PREGNANT CAPTIVE-WOMAN

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited having intercourse with female war-captives (whether as concubines or regular wives) until they purify their wombs from previous relationships.

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said in regard to the war-captives of Awṭās battle:

« لَا تَوَطُّأُ حَامِلٌ حَتَّى تَضَعَ، وَلَا غَيْرُ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَتَّى تَحِيضَ. »

«One may not copulate with a pregnant woman until she delivers, nor with a non-pregnant woman until she menstruates (one time).» ³

Ruwayfi‘ Bin Thābit (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يَسْقِ مَاءَهُ زَرْعَ غَيْرِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يَأْتِ سَبِيًّا مِنَ السَّبْيِ حَتَّى يَسْتَبْرِئَهَا. »

¹ *Ihrām*: A sacred temporary state for a pilgrim during which he renounces many of the worldly pleasures such as women and perfume.

² Recorded by Muslim and others.

³ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 7479 & *Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 187).

«Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day should not irrigate someone else’s plantation with his water (i.e., sperm), and whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day should not copulate with a captive of war until she purifies her womb (by menses).» ¹

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

“When a slave-girl who has had intercourse with men is given away or sold or freed, she should purify (her womb) with one menses. But a virgin need not purify.” ²

Prohibited Marriages of *Jāhiliyyah*

‘ĀISHAH’S *HADĪTH*

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) mentioned some forms of marriage that were common during *Jāhiliyyah* times. ‘Urwah Bin az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) reported that ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) told him that, during *Jāhiliyyah*, marriage was of four different types:

1. The first was like the people’s marriages today, whereupon a man would ask for another man’s daughter or woman under his custody. He would give her a *ṣadāq* and marry her.
2. The second was that a man would tell his wife, after she is clean from menses, ‘Invite so and so, and get impregnated by him.’ Her husband would stay away from her and avoid touching her until it became clear if she was pregnant from the other man. If she became definitely pregnant, her husband would have intercourse with her if he wished. They only did that seeking a noble descent

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 6507, 6508 & *Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 2137).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (without *isnād*) and al-Bayhaqī from Nāfi‘. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 2139).

for the child.

3. The third was that a group of men, less than ten in total, would all go to a woman and perform intercourse with her. If she became pregnant, she would wait until she delivered the child. A few nights later, she would summon all of them, and none of them may refuse to go to her. When they arrive, she would say, "You know what you have done; and I have given birth, so this child is yours, O so-and-so." Thus she names whomever she wishes of them, and that man may not refuse annexing that child to him.
4. The fourth was that a large number of men would go to one woman, and she would not reject anyone who came to her. Those were the prostitutes who raised over their doors flags as signs for those who wished to go to them. And if one of them became pregnant, she would wait until she delivered, summon all the men who had intercourse with her, and have those who specialized in detecting likenesses determine the man whom the child resembled the most so as to append it to him; and he would not have the option to refuse that.

‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) concluded:

"So after Muḥammad (ﷺ) came with the Truth, he revoked all forms of *Jāhiliyyah* marriages — except for the marriage of the people today."¹

The second, third, and fourth forms of marriage mentioned in this *ḥadīth* are all clearly prohibited, and will be briefly discussed below.

PARTIALLY OPEN MARRIAGE

This is the second type in the above *ḥadīth*. A man would urge his wife to have intercourse with another man who is distinguished with courage, nobleness, etc. His purpose is to have her bear a child carrying some noble qualities from that man. Needless to say, this is

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Abū Dāwūd.

outright *zinā*, and a man who does it is clearly a *dayyūth*.

MARRIAGE OF A GROUP

This is the third type in the above *ḥadīth*. A number of men would all be "married" to the same woman and simultaneously have intercourse with her. That represents a clear degeneracy and deviation from the pure human nature and values. It further shows how disgraced and despised women were before Islām.

PUBLIC PROSTITUTION

The fourth type in the above *ḥadīth* is a form of public prostitution. A woman would have a clear sign on her house indicating that she welcomes any man who wishes to have her for a brief period of time, in exchange for an agreed pay. Unfortunately, that kind of multiple "marriage" or "profession" is still practiced in most of the so-called "civilized" nations of our time.

Other Prohibited Marriages

There are other forms of marriage that were practiced during *Jāhiliyyah* or the early years of Islām, but were subsequently prohibited. Among them are the following.

MARRIAGE OF MUTAH

The *mut'ah* (enjoyment) marriage is a temporary marriage. Its duration is specified at the time that the contract is executed. At the end of the term, the two spouses leave each other without divorce. Furthermore, the two partners do not inherit from each other.

This type of marriage was common during *Jāhiliyyah*. Its purpose was to merely fulfill a physical need for the man. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) permitted it for some time, and finally prohibiting it permanently.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«هَدَمَ الْمُتْعَةَ النِّكَاحُ وَالطَّلَاقُ وَالْعِدَّةُ وَالْمِيرَاثُ.»

«*Mut'ah* has been abolished by marriage, divorce, 'iddah, and inheritance.»¹

The 'ulamā' differ as to whether the *mut'ah* marriage was prohibited during the fight of Khaybar or the Conquest of Makkah. The latter position appears to be stronger, and is adopted by most of the 'ulamā'.

Sabrah Bin Ma'bid (رضي الله عنه) reported that at the time of the Conquest of Makkah, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنِّي قَدْ كُنْتُ أَذِنْتُ لَكُمْ فِي الاسْتِمْتَاعِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَرَّمَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ. فَمَنْ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مِنْهُنَّ شَيْءٌ فَلْيُخَلِّ سَبِيلَهُ، وَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئاً.»

«O people! I had previously permitted you to have women by way of *mut'ah*. But indeed, Allāh has now prohibited that until the Day of Resurrection. Thus, anyone who has any such women should let them go, and do not take any of what you gave them.»²

Sabrah (رضي الله عنه) also reported:

“On the year of the Conquest, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) permitted us to enjoy women (with *mut'ah*) as we were entering Makkah. But he later prohibited it for us — even before we left Makkah.”³

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) did not know that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited the *mut'ah* marriage, so 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) reproached him and said to him:

1 Recorded by Ibn Hibbān, ad-Dāraquṭnī, and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7022 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2402).

2 Recorded by Muslim and Ibn Mājah.

3 Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and al-Bayhaqī.

“Indeed, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited enjoying women (*mut'ah*) on the day of Khaybar, and he prohibited eating the ordinary donkeys (contrary to zebras).”¹

MARRIAGE OF TAHLİL

If a man divorces his wife three times, he may not take her back unless she first marries another man². If the second husband divorces her, she may then marry the first husband.

The woman must have intercourse with the second husband before she becomes permissible to the first husband (if the second husband willingly divorces her).

Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that a case was presented to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) as follows, “A man divorced his wife three times. Another man then married her, closed the doors, and dropped the curtains (i.e., he had full privacy with her), but divorced her without performing intercourse with her. Would that make her permissible to the first husband?” He (ﷺ) replied:

«لَا تَحِلُّ لِلأَوَّلِ حَتَّى يَجَامِعَهَا الْآخِرُ.»

«She does not become permissible for the first (husband) until the second performs intercourse with her.»³

Similarly, 'Ā'ishah, Anas, and 'Ubayd Ullāh Bin 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Rufā'ah al-Qarẓī divorced his wife three times, after which she married 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin az-Zubayr. But she did not allow him to approach her and came to the Prophet (ﷺ) claiming that he was impotent, and she requesting divorce. 'Abd ur-Raḥmān refuted this, saying that she actually wanted to go back to her first husband. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then told her that this may not happen unless

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Check *al-Baqarah* 2:229.

3 Recorded by an-Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7253 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1887).

she had intercourse with the second husband.¹

In order to overcome this restriction, some people apply a trick to make it possible for the woman to go back to her husband. Another man (called *muḥill* or *muḥallil*) would marry her, and include a condition in the marriage contract that, as soon as he copulates with her, their marriage becomes terminated. This is a form of *mut'ah* marriage, because it includes the temporary factor. In addition, it represents a clear defiance to Allāh's commands and instructions. Because of this, it deserved Allāh's curse.

‘Alī Bin Abī Ṭālib, ‘Abdullāh Bin Mas‘ūd, and Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لعن الله المُحِلَّ والمُحَلَّلَ لَهُ.»

«Allāh curses the one who performs *taḥlīl*, and the one for whom it is performed.»²

‘Uqbah Bin ‘Āmir (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ألا أخبركم بالتيسر المستعار؟ هو المُحِلُّ، فلَعَنَ اللهُ المُحِلَّ والمُحَلَّلَ لَهُ.»

«Shouldn't I tell you about the borrowed billy goat? It is a person who performs *taḥlīl*. May Allāh curse the one who performs *taḥlīl*, and the one for whom it is performed.»³

Nāfi' reported that a man said to Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ), “Is it permissible for me to marry a woman to make her lawful for her (previous) husband, even though he did not ask me to do it, and I did it without his knowledge.” He replied:

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. Review *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1997 for the various reports of this *ḥadīth*.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1897 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5101).

3 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, al-Ḥākim, and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2596 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1897).

“No! The marriage should only be based on real interest: if you like her you keep her, and if you dislike her you divorce her. We indeed used to consider this (*taḥlīl*) as *zinā* during Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) time. And those who do it will continue to be in a state of *zinā*, if his intention was to make her lawful to the other man, even if they stay together for twenty years!”¹

MARRIAGE OF SHIGHĀR

Shighār is a process whereby two men inter-marry each others' daughters or women under their custody without either one giving a *mahr*. Nāfi' (ﷺ) explained:

“*Shighār* is that a man would marry his daughter to another man with the condition that the other man would marry him his daughter. And they would not require any *mahr* in between them.”²

Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited *shighār* marriages³ and said:

«لا شِغَارَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ.»

«No *shighār* (is permissible) in Islām.»⁴

Even when dowries are specified, this inter-marriage remains as a source of doubt that should be avoided.

Al-A'raj reported that al-‘Abbās Bin ‘Abdillāh Bin ‘Abbās gave his daughter in marriage to ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin al-Ḥakam, and ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān gave his daughter to him in marriage, and they named some *mahrs*. Yet, Mu‘āwiyah (who was the *khalīfah* then) wrote to Marwān Bin al-Ḥakam commanding him to separate between them and

1 Recorded by al-Ḥākim, al-Bayhaqī, and aṭ-Ṭabarānī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1898).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

4 Recorded by Muslim and others.

saying:

“This is the *shighār* marriage that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited.”¹

MARRIAGE WITH THE INTENTION OF DIVORCE

Some men may marry a woman for a specific purpose, intending within themselves to divorce her as soon as that purpose is accomplished. An example of this is a common practice in some Western countries where a foreigner marries a native woman in order to obtain residency in her country, planning to divorce her as soon as he achieves his goal.

If the marriage contract sets a term for this kind of marriage, it becomes a prohibited form of *mut’ah* marriage. If it does not, the majority of ‘*ulamā*’ consider that this marriage is valid but the man sinful because he deceives the woman by hiding his initial intention from her.

Marrying Non-Muslims

GENERAL RULE

Allāh (ﷻ) prohibited marriage with the *mushriks*, males and females:

«وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنَ، وَلَا أُمَّةً مُّؤْمِنَةً حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنَ، وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا، وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ. أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ، وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ» البقرة ٢٢١

«And do not marry pagan women until they believe (in Allāh alone). Indeed, a believing female slave (of

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Ḥibbān. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 1896).

Allāh) is better than a pagan, even though she (the pagan) might appeal to you. And do not marry pagan men until they believe. Indeed, a believing male slave (of Allāh) is better than a pagan, even though he might appeal to you. Those (*mushriks*) invite (you) to the Fire, whereas Allāh invites to *Jannah* and to forgiveness, by His permission.»¹

Every non-Muslim is a *mushrik*. This includes the People of the Scripture (the Jews and Christians) if they worship anyone besides Allāh (like Jesus or ‘Uzayr) or hold other wrong beliefs about Allāh (ﷻ).

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

Allāh (ﷻ) made exception to the above rule by permitting Muslim men to marry Jewish and Christian women — with an important condition: they must be chaste, which means that they are not promiscuous and have not previously had illegitimate sexual relationships with men. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ، وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ، وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ، وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ، إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ، مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَفِّحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ، وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ، وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ» المائدة ٥

«This day all good foods have been made lawful for you; and the food of those who have been given the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them; and (lawful for you for marriage are) chaste believing women and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:221.

you — when you have given them their due compensation — desiring by that chastity, not illicit relationship or taking secret lovers. And whoever denies the faith — his deeds have surely become worthless, and he will be, in the Hereafter, among the losers.»¹

WHO “THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK” ARE

Some of the companions took the position that the above permission only applied to the “unitarian” People of the Book. They argued in regard to a Trinitarian Christian woman, “What form of *shirk* is worse than her claim that her Lord is Jesus?” For example, ‘Alī (ؑ) said:

“The Arab Christians’ slaughtering may not be eaten, because they do not hold to (true) Christianity — besides drinking alcohol.”²

On the other hand, ‘Umar (ؑ) was asked whether it was lawful to eat from the slaughtered meat of a group of Jews who read the Torah and observed the Sabbath but do not believe in resurrection. He said:

“They are a group from the People of the Book.”³

Ibn ‘Abbās (ؓ) said:

“Eat from the slaughtering of the Taghlib⁴ and marry from their women.”⁵

¹ *Al-Mā'idah* 5:5.

² Recorded by ‘Abd ur-Razzāk and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī (*Jāmi‘u Aḥkām in-Nisā’* 3:125).

³ Recorded by ‘Abd ur-Razzāk and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī (*Jāmi‘u Aḥkām in-Nisā’* 3:126).

⁴ An Arab Christian tribe.

⁵ Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī (*Jāmi‘u Aḥkām in-Nisā’* 3:126).

Az-Zuhri (ؑ) was asked about the slaughtering of the Arab Christians. He replied that it was lawful, and said:

“Whoever embraces a religion is considered one of its people.”¹

Ash-Sha‘bī (ؑ) said in answer to a similar question:

“Allāh has made their slaughtering lawful, and your Lord is never forgetful.”²

There are many other similar authentic reports from the *salaf* considering that the Christians and Jews are from “the People of the Book” regardless of their beliefs. This appears to be the stronger of the two opinions.³

A DIFFICULT CONDITION

The condition of “chastity” does not usually hold in our time. A chaste woman is one who has been preserved within her house like a jewel, never having been involved in kissing, touching, petting, or any form of promiscuous relationships with men other than her husband.

A non-Muslim woman has no faith that would prevent her from committing the sin. Added to that is today’s open Western culture that has permitted *zinā* with the approval and encouragement of the parents and relatives. It is seldom to find a girl pass her teenage years without being involved in sexual relationships. Virginity is now a rarity among the Westerners.

Some people may ask, “What if a Christian woman repented from her former promiscuous behavior? Would it then be permissible to marry her?” The answer is that repentance is an act of worship specific to the Muslims. Its first condition is *ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) to Allāh. How

¹ Recorded by ‘Abd ur-Razzāk. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī (*Jāmi‘u Aḥkām in-Nisā’* 3:127).

² Recorded by ‘Abd ur-Razzāk. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-‘Adawī (*Jāmi‘u Aḥkām in-Nisā’* 3:127).

³ Review *Jāmi‘u Aḥkām in-Nisā’* 3:122-128.

could a non-Muslim fulfill this? Her only repentance, then, is by embracing Islām (for the sake of Allāh, and not for marriage).

Even at the peak of the Islāmic power and dominance, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was against marrying from the People of the Book. Abū Wā'il reported that Huthayfah (رضي الله عنه) married a Jewish woman. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) wrote to him, "Divorce her." He wrote back, "If this is unlawful, I will divorce her." 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) wrote:

”إني لا أزعم أنها حرام، ولكنني أخاف أن تعاطوا المومساتِ مِنْهِنَّ.”

"I do not claim that it is unlawful, but I fear that you (Muslims) will soon partake of their whores (if everyone takes this matter lightly)." ¹

Jābir (رضي الله عنه) was asked about marrying Jewish and Christian women. He replied:

"We used to marry them during the times of fighting when we were with Sa'd Bin Abī Waqqāṣ in al-Kūfah. That was because we could then hardly find any Muslim women. But when we came back (from the fights), we divorced them." ²

CONCLUSION

In our times, the Muslims are weak and have the lower hand, even in their own countries. If one marries a non-Muslim woman, he will not be able to enforce an Islāmic environment in his own house. He will see her wear the cross, pray to Jesus, eat pork, and raise his children upon disbelief. This, by itself, is a major act of disobedience that he would bring about for himself and his own offspring. What sin is greater than this sin? This alone is a sufficient reason for the prohibition of such marriages under the current circumstances.

1 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī and Sa'īd Bin Manṣūr. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-'Adawī (*Jāmi'u Aḥkām in-Nisā* 3:122).

2 Recorded by ash-Shāfi'ī (in *al-Umm*) and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by Muṣṭafā al-'Adawī (*Jāmi'u Aḥkām in-Nisā* 3:124).

The excuse that some people give, "This marriage is better than committing *zinā*," is absurd. First, such a marriage is not permissible to start with. Second, its outcome is worse than the worst outcome of *zinā*.

Therefore, young men should fear Allāh and only marry Muslim women who will be good companions for them in this life and would help raise their children upon *Islām*.

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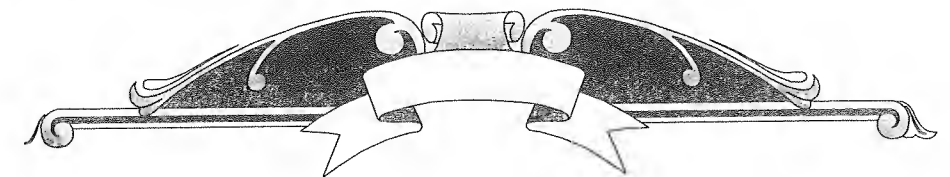
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APPENDIX A: MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

The following sample marriage certificate was developed by the Author as a result of numerous marriages that he performed over more than twenty years. It incorporates the Sunnah requirements for a marriage, as well as legal requirements for Muslims living in the United States or other non-Muslim countries.

Note that the spacing and column-widths have greatly been reduced to allow the certificate to fit on the paper-size of this book. One is advised to modify this as needed when making an enlarged version.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ISLĀMIC MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

PERSONAL DATA

	Bride	Groom
Full Name		
Address and Phone Number		
Birth Place & Date		
Proof of Identity		
Father's Name		
Mother's (Maiden) Name		
Representative (Walī), His Address and Phone Number		(optional)

MARRIAGE DATA

Legal Marriage	State or Locality	Record Number	Date
Islāmic Marriage	Location		Date
Ṣadāq (dowry for the bride)			
Terms & Conditions (optional)			
<p>This is to certify that, on this day, the bride's and the groom's parties have exchanged the <i>ṛjāb</i> and <i>qabūl</i> (offering and acceptance), in accordance with the Allāh's (ﷻ) Book and His Messenger Muḥammad's (ﷺ) Guidance. Finding no apparent Islāmic obstacle to prevent this marriage, I therefore pronounce the above-named groom and bride husband and wife.</p> <p>This certificate carries no independent legal power; the interested parties must file for legal marriage as needed.</p>			

SIGNATURES

By signing this contract, all involved persons declare that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no Islāmically legal reason preventing this marriage. They further agree that any and all possible future disputes related to this marriage must be resolved according to the Islāmic Law.

Bride	Wali	Bridegroom

Witness 1, address, phone no.	Witness 2, address, phone no.	Officiant (Imam or Judge)

Serial Number	Recording Date

SEAL



APPENDIX B: ARABIC TERMINOLOGY

Introduction

TRANSLATING AND REFERENCING QUR'ĀN AND ḤADĪTH

The Qur'ān contains Allāh's exact words that cannot be precisely translated into other languages because of possible misinterpretation and limited human understanding. Therefore, we only translate the meanings as understood by trustworthy Islāmic scholars. Our Qur'ān quotes include the Arabic text, the English meaning in «**boldface**», and a footnote specifying the location of the *āyah*(s) cited.

Similarly, our *ḥadīth* quotes include the Arabic text, the English meaning in «**boldface**», and a footnote briefly specifying its location in *Ḥadīth* compilations and its authenticity verification. If the *ḥadīth* contains a supplication or exaltation, we generally also include a full transliteration of its text.

USEFUL CHARTS

We present below two important charts. The first defines the transliteration symbols that we employ in this book. The second defines terms that should be uttered at the mention of Allāh or one of his righteous worshippers.

ARABIC TERMS

A number of Arabic terms are frequently used in Islāmic discussions, and seem to constitute a basic vocabulary that needs to be available to the readers of books on Islām. We attempt to provide such terms, together with their definitions, in the following glossary. We follow the glossary with a list of the Arabic weekdays and the Islāmic lunar months.

Other terms pertinent to the current book are included in the "Index" section at the end of this appendix, together with a page-reference indicating where they are defined in this book.

Glossary of Common Terms

Term	Definition
'Abd	Slave, servant, or worshiper. Plural: 'ibād or 'abīd.
Adab	Good characters or manners; etiquettes. Plural: Ādāb.
Al-Fātiḥah	The first chapter of the Qur'ān.
'Ālim	A scholar or learned man in Islām.
'Allāmah	Exaggerated form of "ālim".
Āmīn	"O Allāh, answer my supplication."
Anṣār	Madīnah residents who supported the Prophet (ﷺ).
'Aṣr	Afternoon. It is usually applied to the third daily obligatory prayer.
Athān	Call to the prayer.
'Awrah	A weakness that requires protection, or body-parts that must be covered from others.
Āyah	Miracle or sign. Also, the smallest subdivision of the Qur'ānic text — usually one sentence in length. Plural: āyāt.
Biḍ'ah	Unacceptable innovation in one of the Islāmic teachings.
Da'wah	Call or mission.
Dīn	Religion — usually used in reference to the religion of Islām.
Dīnār	An old golden currency.
Dirham	An old currency that was made of silver or copper.
Du'ā	Supplication.
Fajr	Dawn. It usually applies to the first daily obligatory prayer.
Farḍ	Obligation.
Farḍ Kifāyah	A communal obligation that must be performed by at least a few Muslims.
Farḍ 'Ayn	An obligation that must be performed by every Muslim.

Term	Definition
Fatwā	A religious verdict; plural: fatāwā or fatāwī.
Fiqh	Understanding. It is often applied to the subject of "Islāmic jurisprudence" that deals with the practical regulations in Islām.
Fitnah	Trial, test, temptation, or affliction.
Ghayb	All knowledge that is beyond the reach of human perception.
Ghusl	A ritual bath required after intercourse, ejaculation, and after a woman becomes clean from her menses.
Hadīth	Reports of the Prophet's (ﷺ) sayings, actions, and tacit approvals.
Hajj	Major pilgrimage to Makkah.
Halāl	Permissible.
Halqah	A circle or ring. It normally refers to a study circle.
Harām	Prohibited.
Hasan	Good or acceptable.
Hilāl	Crescent
Hijāb	Cover. It usually refers to the Muslim woman's proper clothing
Hijrah	Migration — usually refers to the Prophet's migration to al-Madīnah.
'Id	Festival. Plural: ā'yād.
Ijmā'	Consensus.
Ijtihād	Striving to reach a right conclusion from available evidence.
Imām	A leader or distinguished Islāmic scholar. It is often applied to the leader of prayer.
Īmān	Faith or belief.
'Ishā	Night. It is usually applied to the fifth daily obligatory prayer.
Isnād	Chain of narrators of a ḥadīth.
Jāhiliyyah	The era of ignorance (jahl) and disbelief prior to Islām.

Term	Definition
<i>Jamā'ah</i>	A Muslim congregation or community.
<i>Janāzah</i>	A funeral, or a deceased's prepared body.
<i>Jannah</i>	The Garden (of paradise).
<i>Jihād</i>	Striving or fighting for Allāh's cause.
<i>Jinn</i>	A creation that Allāh (ﷻ) made from fire and smoke, sometimes translated as "demon". Satan is one of the <i>jinns</i> .
<i>Jumu'ah</i>	Friday. It also applies to the Friday prayer.
<i>Kāfir</i>	A person who practices <i>kufṛ</i> . Plural: " <i>kuffār</i> ".
<i>Khalīfah</i>	Successor. It commonly refers to a Muslim ruler who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) in leading the Muslims. Plural: <i>khulafā'</i> .
<i>Khamr</i>	Alcoholic beverages.
<i>Khilāfah</i>	Successorship. It usually refers to the period of rule of a <i>khalīfah</i> .
<i>Kufr</i>	Disbelief or rejection of faith.
<i>Khuṭbah</i>	Speech or sermon.
<i>Maghrib</i>	Sunset. It is usually applied to the fourth daily obligatory prayer.
<i>Makrūh</i>	An act that is disapproved in Islām.
<i>Maḥram</i>	A man closely related to a woman and permanently prohibited from marrying her, such as her father, son, brother, uncle, nephew, father-in-law, son-in-law, suckling son, etc. Examples of non- <i>maḥrams</i> : first cousins, step brothers, and brothers-in-law.
<i>Masjid</i>	Place designated for <i>sujūd</i> ; mosque.
<i>Mathhab</i>	Way or approach. It usually refers to one of the four Islāmic schools of <i>fiqh</i> : the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī.
<i>Minbar</i>	Steps mounted by an <i>imām</i> in a <i>masjid</i> for delivering a <i>khuṭbah</i> .
<i>Muhājir</i>	A migrator — a person who undertakes <i>hijrah</i> . Plural: <i>muhājirūn</i> or <i>muhājirīn</i> . It usually refers to those who migrated to Madīnah.
<i>Mujāhid</i>	A person who performs <i>jihād</i> . Plural: <i>mujāhidūn</i> or <i>mujāhidīn</i> .

Term	Definition
<i>Munkar</i>	Disapproved; rejected.
<i>Muṣallā</i>	A place designated for prayer.
<i>Mushrik</i>	A person who practices <i>shirk</i> . Plural: <i>mushrikūn</i> or <i>mushrikīn</i> .
<i>Nafl</i>	Extra, voluntary, or supererogatory deeds.
<i>Qadar</i>	Allāh's decree and measure.
<i>Qiblah</i>	The direction of al-Ka'bah in Makkah.
<i>Qiyām</i>	Literally means standing. It usually refers to the night prayer.
<i>Qudusī</i>	Holy. A <i>qudusī ḥadīth</i> is quoted by the Prophet (ﷺ) from Allāh.
<i>Rak'ah</i>	A full prayer unit, containing one <i>rukū'</i> . Plural: <i>rak'āt</i> .
<i>Rukū'</i>	The act of bowing in the prayer.
<i>Ṣadaqah</i>	Charity.
<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>	The Prophet's companions; singular: <i>ṣaḥābī</i> .
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i>	True or authentic.
<i>Salaf</i>	The early righteous pioneers and scholars of Islām.
<i>Ṣalāh</i>	Prayer.
<i>Salām</i>	Peace. It also means the greeting with peace (<i>as-salāmu 'alaykum</i>).
<i>Sanad</i>	Same as <i>isnād</i> .
<i>Shahādah</i>	Testimony; it is mostly applied to the testimony of Islām: "There is no true god but Allāh, and Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger." Also, it is often applied to martyrdom in Allāh's (ﷻ) cause.
<i>Shahīd</i>	A person martyred for Allāh's cause. Feminine: <i>Shahīdah</i> .
<i>Shām</i>	General Middle-East area of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, including the major cities of Jerusalem and Damascus.
<i>Shar' or Sharī'ah</i>	The Islāmic Law. " <i>Shar'ī</i> " means a legislated or permissible matter in Islām. And " <i>ash-Shārī</i> " is the Legislator: Allāh (ﷻ).

Term	Definition
<i>Shaykh</i>	An elderly man. It is commonly used as a title of respect for a man with some level of Islāmic knowledge.
<i>Shayṭān</i>	Satan.
<i>Shirk</i>	Polytheism or paganism — ascribing divinity to other than Allāh, or joining partners with Him in worship.
<i>Ṣiyām</i>	Fasting.
<i>Sujūd</i>	The act of prostration in the prayer.
<i>Sunnah</i>	Way, guidance, or teachings. Most commonly, it refers to the Prophet's (ﷺ) way and guidance.
<i>Sūrah</i>	Qur'ānic chapter.
<i>Tābi'ī</i>	Literally, follower. It normally refers to a student of the <i>ṣaḥābah</i> . Plural: <i>tābi'ūn</i> or <i>tābi'īn</i> .
<i>Tafsīr</i>	Qur'ānic commentaries and interpretations.
<i>Takbīr</i>	Saying, "Allāhu Akbar — Allāh is the greatest."
<i>Tahlīl</i>	Saying, "Lā ilāha illallāh — There is no (true) god except Allāh."
<i>Taqlīd</i>	Imitation, especially without knowledge.
<i>Taqwā</i>	Fearing and revering Allāh.
<i>Tasbīḥ</i>	Saying, "Subḥān Allāh — Exalted is Allāh."
<i>Tashahhud</i>	Pronouncing the <i>Shahādah</i> . It is mostly applied to the last part of the prayer that includes the <i>Shahādah</i> and <i>ṣalāh</i> upon the Prophet (ﷺ).
<i>Tayammum</i>	A symbolic ablution, in the absence of water, performed by wiping clean dust over the hands (to the wrists) and face.
<i>Taslīm</i>	Saying <i>salām</i> , especially to conclude the prayer.
<i>Tawāf</i>	Circumambulation around the Ka'bah.
<i>Tawḥīd</i>	Belief that Allāh is the only Lord and God who deserves to be worshiped, and who possesses the excellent and perfect attributes.
<i>Thikr</i>	Extolment: remembering Allāh (ﷻ) and mentioning Him.

Term	Definition
' <i>Ulamā</i>	Plural of "‘ālim".
<i>Ummah</i>	Community, nation, or followers.
' <i>Umrah</i>	A minor form of pilgrimage to Makkah that may be performed at any time of the year.
<i>Waḥy</i>	Revelation or inspiration.
<i>Wājib</i>	Obligatory or required.
<i>Witr</i>	Odd number. The entire night prayer is sometimes called <i>witr</i> because the total number of its <i>rak'āt</i> is odd.
<i>Wuḍū'</i>	Ritual ablution for the prayer, which includes washing the face and forearms, wiping over the head, and washing the feet.
<i>Zakāh</i>	Obligatory charity.
<i>Zinā</i>	Adultery or fornication.
<i>Zuhr</i>	Noon. It usually refers to the second daily obligatory prayer.

Arabic Weekdays and Islāmic *Hijrī* Months

	Weekday	Arabic Name	اليوم
1	Friday	<i>Al-Jumu'ah</i>	الجمعة
2	Saturday	<i>As-Sabt</i>	السبت
3	Sunday	<i>Al-Aḥad</i>	الأحد
4	Monday	<i>Al-Ithnayn</i>	الاثنين
5	Tuesday	<i>Ath-Thulāthā'</i>	الثلاثاء
6	Wednesday	<i>Al-Arbu'a'</i>	الأربعاء
7	Thursday	<i>Al-Khamīs</i>	الخميس

	Lunar Month	الشَّهْرُ		Lunar Month	الشَّهْرُ
1	<i>Muḥarram</i>	مُحَرَّم	7	<i>Rajab</i>	رَجَب
2	<i>Ṣafar</i>	صَفَر	8	<i>Sha'bān</i>	شَعْبَان
3	<i>Rabī' al-Awwal</i>	رَبِيعُ الْأَوَّلِ	9	<i>Ramaḍān</i>	رَمَضَان
4	<i>Rabī' al-Ākhir</i>	رَبِيعُ الْآخِرِ	10	<i>Shawwāl</i>	شَوَّال
5	<i>Jumāda Ūlā</i>	جُمَادَى الْأُولَى	11	<i>Thul-Qa'dah</i>	ذُو الْقَعْدَةِ
6	<i>Jumāda Ākhirah</i>	جُمَادَى الْآخِرَةِ	12	<i>Thul-Hijjah</i>	ذُو الْحِجَّةِ

Transliteration

Except for proper nouns, transliterated Arabic terms are *italicized*. In general, the rules of English pronunciation are applicable. The following table includes additional symbols employed in this book to help pronounce the Arabic terms.

Symbol	Stands for	English Equivalent Sounds
ā, Ā	(ا) <i>Alif</i> (long vowel a)	Mostly: <u>Ma</u> n, <u>sa</u> d. At times: <u>Fa</u> ther, <u>ha</u> rd, <u>go</u> d.
ū, Ū	(و) <i>Wāw</i> (long vowel u)	<u>Ro</u> ot, <u>so</u> up, <u>flu</u> te.
ī, Ī	(ي) <i>Yā'</i> (long vowel i)	<u>Se</u> ed, <u>lea</u> n, <u>pie</u> ce, <u>recei</u> ve.
'	(ء) <i>Hamzah</i>	The first consonant vocal sound uttered when saying: <u>a</u> t, <u>i</u> t, <u>o</u> h.
Th, th	(ث) <i>Thā'</i>	<u>Th</u> ree, <u>mo</u> th.
Ḥ, ḥ	(ح) <i>Ḥā'</i>	No equivalent. Produced in the lower throat, below "h". It somewhat resembles the "h" in "ahem".
Kh, kh	(خ) <i>Khā'</i>	No equivalent. Produced in the back of the mouth and top of the throat.

Symbol	Stands for	English Equivalent Sounds
Th, th	(ذ) <i>Thāl</i>	<u>Th</u> ere, <u>mo</u> ther.
Ṣ, ṣ	(ص) <i>Ṣād</i>	A deeper "s" sound. Somewhat close to the "sc" in "mus <u>cl</u> e".
Ḍ, ḍ	(ض) <i>Ḍād</i>	Sounds deeper than a "d". Produced by touching the tongue to the mouth's roof, with the sides of the tongue pressed against the top molars.
Ṭ, ṭ	(ط) <i>Ṭah</i>	Similar but deeper than a "t".
Z, z	(ظ) <i>Zah</i>	A deeper <i>thāl</i> , produced by touching the backside of the tongue to the tip of the upper front teeth.
'	(ع) <i>'Ayn</i>	Produced in the bottom of the throat, underneath "h".
Gh, gh	(غ) <i>Ghayn</i>	A gurgling sound produced in the back of the mouth, just above the <i>khā'</i> . Similar to the "R" in some French accents.
Q, q	(ق) <i>Qāf</i>	Somewhat similar to the "c" in "c <u>o</u> ffee".

Notable Utterances

Out of love, appreciation, gratitude and other noble feelings, a Muslim is encouraged to utter the following phrases at the mention of Allāh, His messengers, or other righteous individuals.

Phrase	Mentioned with	Transliteration	Meaning
سُبْحَانَكَ	Allāh's Name	<i>Subḥānahū wa ta'ālā</i>	He is exalted above weakness and indignity.
عِزِّكَ	Allāh's Name	<i>'Azza wa-jal</i>	He is exalted and glorified.
جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ	Allāh's Name	<i>Jalla jalāluh</i>	Exalted is His glory.
سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ	Muḥammad and other prophets	<i>Ṣalla 'Llāhu 'al-ayhi wa sallam</i>	May Allāh's peace and praise be on him.

Phrase	Mentioned with	Transliteration	Meaning
ﷺ	Prophets and angels	'Alayh is-Salām	Peace be on him.
ﷺ	A male companion	Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhu	May Allāh be pleased with him.
ﷺ	A female companion	Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhā	May Allāh be pleased with her.
ﷺ	Two companions	Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhumā	May Allāh be pleased with them.
ﷺ	More than two companions	Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhum	May Allāh be pleased with them.
ﷺ	A past scholar or righteous Muslim	Raḥimahu 'Llāh	May Allāh have mercy on him.

Index of Arabic Terms

<i>Aqīṭ</i>	101	<i>Khulwah</i>	40
<i>Bikr</i>	59	<i>Khul'</i>	46
<i>Dayyūth</i>	25	<i>Kuhl</i>	96
<i>Dībāj</i>	108	<i>Lahw</i>	92
<i>Duff</i>	91	<i>Mahr</i>	68
<i>Ḍuḥā</i>	125	<i>Maṣlaḥah</i>	41
<i>Dunyā</i>	79	<i>Mukātib</i>	4
<i>Faskh</i>	46	<i>Mu'ah</i>	153
<i>Ḥayā'</i>	59	<i>Nakaḥa</i>	
<i>Hays</i>	94	<i>Nikāḥ</i>	2
<i>Ḥaysah</i>	94	<i>Qabūl</i>	56
<i>Ḥinnā'</i>	96	<i>Qinṭār</i>	70
<i>'Iddah</i>	36	<i>Ṣadāq</i>	68
<i>Iḥrām</i>	150	<i>Shighār</i>	157
<i>Iḥtisāb</i>	112	<i>Shubḥah</i>	109
<i>Ījāb</i>	56	<i>Tharīd</i>	125
<i>Ikhḷāṣ</i>	161	<i>Thayyib</i>	60
<i>Istikhārah</i>	49	<i>Ūqiyyah</i>	72
<i>Junub</i>	137	<i>Walī</i>	64
<i>Khaṭaba</i>		<i>Walāyah</i>	68
<i>Khiṭbah</i>	35	<i>Walīmah</i>	101

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